



# BBWN

January-  
February, 1985

Vol.3, No.1 P.O. Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130



## Creative Deviance

So incredibly much, it seems, has sprung to life in the last few years. I am fortunate and proud to have been involved in the Boston blossoming of two of the most important areas of the pro-sex movement---the bisexual and S/M liberation fronts.

Having had an S/M identity all my life (though at first I didn't know what to call it), I have sometimes found it hard to remember that what for me is the core of arousal strikes trepidation into the hearts of many others; that what for me is delight and adventure and necessity is for many "the last taboo"; that consensual scenarios of dominance and submission invoke for many the shadows of assault and coercion. But I had more or less accepted this, and made my peace with answering and placing personal ads and later intermittently connecting with them the very fragmentary mixed S/M support group, TES (the Till Eulenspiegel Society), Boston. In the early 1970s New York had seen the formation of that Society, and later San Francisco had the mixed group Janus and the women's groups Cardea and Samois; NYC also had the Lesbian Sex Mafia for lesbian and (female) bisexual outcasts of all persuasions; but not many people were aware of these possibilities for support. It was hard enough meeting men into the S/M Scene, let alone women.

Imagine my delight, then, when the S/M controversy came to the forefront in the pages of GCN. I devoured the essays and letters, wrote a letter of my own, and hoped I would eventually meet people this way.

continued on page 4

## Our Chicago Sisters

ACTION BI WOMEN is a support network for and of women who identify as bisexual, or who are exploring sexual options. Our purpose is to provide a safe place for women to explore their sexuality without pressure to choose a specific sexual orientation; to support and validate the self-acceptance of bisexual women. Such a place is still difficult for women -- whether bisexual, lesbian or heterosexual -- to find.

ABW grew from a public meeting at a Chicago women's bookstore, organized by a small group of bisexual women in January 1984. Over 70 women crowded this event. From their energy and enthusiasm, ABW was born.

With a mailing list now of some 150 women, ABW includes women of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, classes, cultures, neighborhoods, ages, and marital status. Some of us are long-time gay or feminist activists; some of us have been straight-identified and not politically active. Some of us are married; some are single; some live with lovers of either gender. Some of us are monogamous; some are involved in multiple relationships.

All of us are subject to oppression both from without and within. We recognize and respect the diversity of our experiences and preferences. We are committed to a network where all women can give and receive support.

Since our birth in January, potluck-meetings have taken place about twice monthly on Sunday evenings, open to all interested women. Events for our lesbian and/or male lovers and friends are also organized.

Membership is open to any interested woman paying sliding scale dues. For more information, write c/o Gay Horizons, 3225 North Sheffield, 60657.



## Next General Meeting



The next General Meeting of the BBWN will be held at Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin St., Boston on Wednesday, Jan. 16 at 7:00 P.M. The topic for discussion will be "Coming Out To Women Friends". Somewhere is a woman's space and easily accessible by T. Take the green line to Government Center; the blue line to Aquarium, or the orange line to State St. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE, ALL WOMEN WELCOME.

## Next C.C. Meeting

The next BBWN Co-ordinating Committee meeting will be held on Jan. 20. in Brookline at the home of Betty A. Call 731-1399 for directions. Maps will be handed out at the next Gen. Mtg.

The newsletter of The Boston Bisexual Women's Network



A label is only a label. Some say that the label one uses to describe themselves, more specifically their sexuality, is only as important as you make it. I guess to me labels are more important than I care to admit sometimes. Learning that there was such a thing as "bisexuality" was very important to me in my coming out process. When people ask me how long I've been out, I usually reply "To myself or my friends?" You see, before I realized I had "homosexual tendencies," people assumed I was gay. I think I am the only one in the world who was out to others before I was out to myself. I wish they had told me, my life would have been a lot easier the first 25 years.

Well, since I have allowed myself to believe that I could be bi, have become more comfortable with that side of myself, and have explored that side, I have begun to wonder if I have a straight side any more.

As I have gotten involved with the network, and the women's community in general, I am feeling really secure with myself and my sexuality for probably the first time in my life. That comfort, as life would have it, is in fact beginning to lead to some discomfort. Now I am beginning to wonder if I am even bisexual. I am feeling extremely woman-identified.

Am I the "bisexual" that makes the label less valid to the lesbian/gay community? Am I really a lesbian that has just had a hard time admitting to it? Am I holding on to "heterosexual privilege"? If I am, then why? A man asked me out today and I started getting really nervous about it. I said to some friends -- "I hope he doesn't see this 'date' as leading somewhere, after all, I am gay." I heard myself saying it and began to wonder why I use the label bi. There is obviously a big part of myself that doesn't feel too 'bi' any more. I have gone to Lesbian Liberation meetings at the Women's Center, I have even gone to a DOB meeting. I sometimes even use the word lesbian to describe myself (with increasing comfort!)

I am not interested in men right now. I haven't been involved with a man in a steady relationship in many years and even sometimes, dare I admit, I dream of living on Maternas as described in the book *Daughters of a Coral Dawn*.

Maternas, for those of you who haven't yet read this wonderful book, is a planet of just women. Hardly bisexual thoughts. In fact they are borderline separatist. Actually they are quite separatist.

So, what is a bisexual? I spoke with a couple of lesbians once about bisexuality. They said they were "historic bisexuals." Maybe we need words like "actively bisexual" or "inactively bisexual." Or is Bisexuality just a state of mind? Somehow I can justify in my mind a woman being with a man long term but calling herself bisexual in order to have that "woman-identified" part of herself acknowledged. But if I am with women and women only, do I need to keep that connection with the male part of myself?

I have always said that I didn't feel comfortable using the label 'lesbian' out of respect for women who have made that life choice. I didn't want to come out as 'lesbian' to my friends and family, and two years from now have the perfect new-age feminist man fall into my lap, get married, have 2.3 children, a house in the burbs etc. I was so afraid that my straight friends would say, "See, all lesbians eventually go straight -- they just needed to find the right man." But see, I assumed that women who called themselves lesbians had made a life choice. I am finding out that my assumption was wrong. Maybe lesbian can be used to describe where you are right now. Can I be a lesbian who still notices a cute guy walking down the street? Maybe I am a "lesbian with occasional bisexual tendencies"! Or better still, "Does it matter?"

I have been pretty involved with the network for over a year now. I enjoy my connections with the people in the network. Maybe having women in the network who are lesbians and women who are straight can help us be even more of a link between the straight and lesbian/gay communities. Any thoughts or similar feelings?

-----Betty A.

## WE KNOW YOU KNOW

that SOJOURNER is Boston's women's newspaper. But do you subscribe? If so, then you get the paper much faster—and give us much-needed support. So why not arrange to get the news, calendar listings, and other wonderful things we offer before they're available on newsstands? Just send your name and address (and \$11) to: SOJOURNER, 143 Albany St., Cambridge, MA 02139. Your writing, photos, and ads are also welcome, of course; just call 661-3567 for details.





"They told me upstairs there were 'bisexual lessons' down here?"

Just 2 short years ago, Sylvia S. walked into the founding meeting of the BBWN at the Women's Center in Cambridge and asked this question. She has received lessons, for sure, and in fact has become one of the instructors. The name of the course was "Everything You Wanted to Know About How to Run a Women's Network - But Were Afraid To Ask".

At that meeting, Sylvia rolled up her sleeves and dug right in. She became involved in the planning of the first bisexual contingent of the Gay Pride March. There was a banner to make and publicity that needed to be done. From that point on, Sylvia became a very important member of the BBWN co-ordinating committee and of the network itself.

For over two years now, Sylvia has put a tremendous amount of weekly energy into the network. She now holds the only official "office" in the network -- that of "Treasurer". Each week Sylvia spends upwards of 4 hours keeping financial records for the BBWN. This involves balancing the checkbook, depositing contributions, writing the checks to cover our expenditures, making sure there is money in our account at the Post Office to cover the cost of our mailings etc. etc.

For general meetings every other month, Sylvia books the space, designs the flyers, prints them to give out for distribution, does all the radio and newspaper publicity, and has been very instrumental in the running of almost every general meeting the network has had.

This year for Gay Pride, Sylvia suggested we have network T-shirts made. She design them, found a place to silkscreen them, and handled the sales of the BBWN's first shirt. For the pre-pride brunch, Sylvia did much of the food planning, location planning, and did publicity for the brunch.

Sylvia helped plan the BBWN Beach Day, the Mondale/Ferraro fundraiser, and on top of it all, has never missed a co-ordinating committee meeting in two years.

I could go on and on. "How does she ever find the time?" you may be asking. No one knows for sure since she does have a full time job and is an aspiring photographer in classes or in the darkroom almost every night.

Would you like to meet this Bisexual Wonder? Come to any BBWN meeting or party -- she is always there. When you do meet her, tell her thank you and tell her you appreciate all her time, effort and enthusiasm. We certainly do.

There are many people that help to make a network such as this one a success. Sylvia is just one of many women, but as you can see, a very valuable one.

SYLVIA - when you read this at the newsletter stuffing, don't be angry. We just wanted you to know that WE LOVE YOU!!!!!!

----- BA



NEWSLETTER STAFF-Betty A., editor; Lesley P., asst. editor; Elissa M., Jean K., Cathy J., Robyn T., and a special thanks to all who contributed articles, letters, and time to get this newsletter out.

It was decided that Sylvia be recognized for all the work she does for BBWN and to be named our Official Treasurer.

There was a discussion about a special spring mailing that will include an annual report on the past year's activities, a thank you to everyone who renewed their annual membership and a copy of the Bi-Laws.

The newsletter will now be titled: Bi-Lines.

To the question of how BBWN can support Sojourner's struggles, several ideas were explored: a fundraiser organized with a straight women's and lesbian group, a raffle, subscription forms and pleas in Bi-Lines.

To avoid overwhelming any one person or household with the responsibility of BBWN calls, it was decided to solicit donations for an answering machine and phone line.

The highlight of the meeting began with yet another discussion on the structure of the Network. Apparently, there isn't a steady flow of energy that keeps BBWN alive. At critical times, the problems and responsibilities get dumped on a lucky few who start to show signs of the contagious Bisexual Panic. It was agreed that a way to equalize this dumping and stabilize the Network is to activate the Emergency Shit Distribution Mechanism. One person would assume the responsibility for a year of ensuring that the Newsletter is published regularly. This General Editor would supervise the co-editors and do their work if they can't.

-----Cathy

## Community Calendar

- JAN 25 RUTH PERRY, AMY LANG, and CLAIRE KRAMSCH, songs of woman's experiences. 12-3pm., Mezzanine Lounge, Student Center MIT.
- JAN 25 + 26 FARINA, ODETTA, + more, 2 evenings of woman and music by Folk Tree Concerts. 6 + 9:45pm. shows, call 641-1010.
- JAN 26 SOJOURNER BENEFIT -- MARQUEE, Mass. Ave., Central Sq., Camb., by Something About The Woman radio show, (WMFO-FM -- 91.5 -- Sats. 10a - 2p).
- FEB. 2 CASSELBURY AND DUPREE, Mass. College of Art Auditorium, 621 Huntington Ave. Boston, 8 P.M. --DON'T MISS THIS!!!
- FEB. 12 BISEXUAL SUPPORT GROUP, Tuesday evening, first meeting of support group for bisexual women at ARADIA COUNSELING. See classified listings for more information or call 247-4861 x58.
- FEB. 22 + 23 SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK, Strand Theatre, Dorchester, 8 P.M.
- MARCH 9 DIANE LINDSAY AND SUE FINK, Sleeper Auditorium, 871 Comm. Ave., Boston, 8pm



About a year after this I got involved in the planning of the Erotic Liberation Event, to be held at Arlington Street Church in Gay Pride Week of 1982. This was where I first met Lisa Orlando, who gave both the introductory speech and her own speech on bisexuality. This Event, for people of every sex and preference, with speakers of every sexual persuasion (including me as one of two speakers on S/M) and speakouts by members of the audience, turned out, to my mind, to be one of the all-time greats. The huge turnout forced us to relocate to the Sanctuary; the mood was celebratory and non-confrontational; and the subsequent march under the Vice Squad's windows was a most satisfying conclusion.

Then, that fall, the first ad appeared in GCN heralding the formation of a lesbian S/M support group in the Boston area. I jumped for joy. Some 30 women arrived at the Cambridge Women's Center for the meeting. The Center lets any women's group hold one first meeting there, but, after deliberation, was opposed to allowing S/M (read Violence-Against-Women) meetings to continue further under its auspices, so women began meeting at their homes. It was during the aftermath of one of the deliberation meetings at the Center that Lisa, who had come to speak in support of the S/M women's right to Center space, mentioned to me that her bisexual support group had space for one more. I leapt at the chance---and I am still with the Bivocals.

Shortly it became apparent that there was a division in the S/M group between those who felt comfortable with the presence of bisexual women and those who did not, and the resulting split led to the formation of the lesbian and bisexual women's S/M support group---Urania.

Named by one of its members for the astrological associations of the planet Uranus with creative deviance, the group is for all women interested in woman-to-woman S/M. It has lived up to its avowed intention of being "a safe non-competitive space for women of all levels of experience (and non-experience) to share personal and political aspects of our sexuality."

We meet once a month, when possible in a public space, sometimes in members' houses, for discussion, and meetings for business are scheduled ad hoc, as are workshops, where members can do S/M scenes with each other at whatever level they desire, sharing safety tips, clever ideas, emotional support, and specialty humour. (One early member had decided that the lesbian S/M anthology Coming to Power needs a sequel, Laughing to Power.)

Urania also offers speakers for various groups and events. In Gay Pride Week of 1983 we co-sponsored a forum with the (now basically dormant) lesbian only support group; over 50 women attended. We sent speakers to BAGLY, to a forum at Smith College, to a radio show in P'town...and we would be delighted to send speakers to a BBWN group should that be of interest!

## BODYWORKS

COME HELP US CELEBRATE AT OUR

SECOND ANNIVERSARY PARTY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10

5:30 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.

FOOD + REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED



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## Growing with Pride

TES Boston has grown into quite a thriving organization, but the number of women is considerably smaller than that of men and there have not been any sub-groups formed. A number of Uranians have gone to TES events, but Urania fills a very special need. For me it has been the source of several very close friendships, and a place where I could freely discuss my concerns and interests in the world of S/M, without being uncomfortable about the facts that my feelings flow toward both women and men. S/M is a paradoxical, mysterious, wonderful thing, and it has been an honour to get to know, through the months, these women who have been brave and true to themselves enough to come out into the Scene and into the group.

For more information call me at 787-3475 (after 10 AM), or call Betsy at 731-4230, or Brianna at 623-0138.

-----Joanna

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The book, A Woman's Touch - an anthology of lesbian eroticism and sensuality, can be purchased at New Words. This book contains many S/M erotic short stories. An essay entitled "SM and Feminism" is partially included. For a longer more detailed version of the article "SM & Feminism," send a \$1.00 money order to Janet Schrim, P.O. Box 2364, Berkeley, CA 94702.



Dear BBWN,

First of all, I'd like to Thank you for being there. Since your workshop at NEWMR this summer, your newsletters and just knowing you exist have been a great help to me in my coming out process, in my becoming more confident in my sexuality, my bisexuality.

Secondly, two friends from Philadelphia and I were so excited by your NEWMR workshop that we are now planning -- or rather, beginning plans -- to do a workshop here for bi women. We're shooting for late January or early February. What suggestions, literature, etc. do you have for organizing such a workshop? As far as I know, this will be the first of its kind in the area, so it will definitely be introductory. We haven't yet gotten a coordinators' meeting together, so I'm not sure of what others' visions are -- but my impression is that we're feeling pretty open-minded about what we want to come out of this meeting -- a support group, network, or workshop series would all be OK depending on interest and energy.

I'd love to know more about your current structure and especially how you got started. That sort of information would be very helpful to us in deciding how to go.

Thanks for everything, and please write back -- the sooner the better!

In sisterhood,

---Lysbeth, Philadelphia

Dear BBWN,

Thank you so much for your newsletter. I regret not being able to contribute at this time, but I am on a very, very low budget here at school.

I am from Boston and I would like to attend meetings when I am home for vacations and the summer.

I have known for quite a while that I am bisexual, but I have been unsure about how to go about pursuing it. The meetings seem like a good way to get involved with other bi women and also to understand myself.

Not many people know I am bi, except for a few friends who are bi also. I'm looking forward to being able to share myself with more people because sometimes I feel as if I constantly hide a major part of myself.

Well anyway, thanks again for your response and I will eagerly await more information! P.S. I will send some money as soon as I can spare some!!

-----Trasee.

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ARADIA



COUNSELING

individual, couple and group counseling for Women

Dear Sisters,

I met Sara at the 1st Southern Women's Music Festival where she called a gathering of bisexual women. When I saw the note I thought "finally -- I've arrived." Having continuously professed actual bisexual orientation for 12 years and taking more abuse from everyone (i.e., No-you're really straight, No-you're really gay) than anyone should have to for anything, I, of course, burst into tears upon walking up to, sitting down with and communicating with these other "out-of-the-closet" women who felt as I did. I'm pregnant with my second child and when I walked up to this group and sheepishly asked, "Is this the right (?) group?" a sweet sister looked at my beautiful, bare belly and laughingly said, "Yeah, I think so!" I've never released so much energy and got so much in return. It was wonderful.

But to also find out that there was a network - women across the country - radical feminists, many who came to loving women through feminism like me - actually connecting, sharing and working together. Please send me a copy of the newsletter, subscription rates, connect me with a sister group in or near Houston -- whatever you have, I'm interested. I love you all. Keep on loving!!!

-----Becky from Texas

Dear BBWN,

In my letter concerning alternative, non-sexist rock'n'roll in the last issue of the newsletter, my phone number was printed incorrectly. I'd like to instead let people know the address of Rock Against Sexism: 52 Garrison Rd., Brookline, MA 02146. Please drop us a note if we can be of any help in pooling resources on non-sexist cultural or political activity. Also, I'd like to take this opportunity to tell everyone that Rock Against Sexism is going through a crisis of member burnout and we have a pressing need for energetic new blood in the organization if RAS is to survive. Any amount of involvement, from a few hours spent posterizing to ongoing input into our activities is welcomed with pleasure. We are at a turning point as to the future direction of the organization (...more political action? More women-oriented activity? More art & music?... ) so new people can have lots of input into our future. If you're intrigued, drop us a card and we'll contact you! With love and sisterhood,

-----Liz N.

## We Need Help!

The newsletter staff needs new people! Yes you! You can help put the newsletter together. Poets, writers, artists, typists, editors and extra hands are wanted and welcome. Please call Betty at 731-1399.



**RESPONSE:** It is important to learn the difference between "healthy guilt" and "unhealthy guilt." It makes sense that we would feel guilty for self-transgressions that are unfair and hurtful to other people. It doesn't make sense to allow guilt to cripple who we are inside ourselves. How much you and your womyn lover trust one another will affect your choices about moves toward your male friend. Incidentally, how does he feel about potentially hurting her feelings?

# Classified

WOMAN WANTED---Roommate for 3 bedroom apt. in Brookline. New carpets, big sunny living room, skylight, glassed in porch. Third floor of house on Beacon St. No pets. No smoking. \$275.00/mo. heated. Call Jean at 739-2963.

**NEW WORDS**  
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Following is a list of selected resources which may help you decide when, whether and how to come out to your parents.

FOR YOU:

Baetz, Ruth, Lesbian Crossroads: Personal Stories of Lesbian Struggles and Triumphs (Wm. Morrow, 1980). Personal accounts by 15 women of diverse backgrounds. Section on their dealings with parents & siblings.

Hanckel, Frances and John Cunningham. A Way of Love, A Way of Life: A Young Person's Introduction to What it Means To Be Gay (Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, Div. of Wm. Morrow, 1979). Written especially for teenagers but good for anyone. Includes chapter on "Family Relationships and Friendships."

Lewis, Sasha Gregory. Sunday's Women: A Report on Lesbian Life Today (Beacon Press, 1979).  
Personal statements from 25 women. Brief but useful chapter on "Parents and In-Laws."

Weinberg, George. Society and the Healthy Homosexual (St. Martin's Press, 1972). Excellent section on "Communications with Parents."

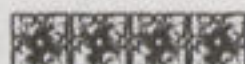
Coming Out To Your Parents (Pamphlet). Single free copies available with SASE from Parents PLAG, Box 24565, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

AND FOR PARENTS:

Hobson, Laura Z. Consenting Adults (Doubleday, 1975). A novel dealing with how a mother works through a child's coming out.

Fairchild, Betty and Howard, Nancy. Now That You Know: What Every Parent Should Know About Homosexuality (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1979). Authorizes how today's experts define homosexuality, and what it means to be a parent. Good "1st book" to give your parents."

Switzer, David K. and Shirley. Parents of the Homosexual (Westminster Press, 1980). The authors examine the anger and guilt parents often feel toward their child, themselves and God when dealing with their children's homosexuality.



About Our Children (Pamphlet). Single free copies available with SASE from Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays, P.O. Box 24565, Los Angeles, CA 90024).

Changing Views of Homosexuality (Pamphlet).  
Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 563; Public  
Affairs, 381 Park Ave., NY, NY 10016. \$.50.

Note: All of the literature listed above deals with coming out to one's parents as homosexual. Does anyone know of any literature that deals with coming out to one's parents AS BISEXUAL?

## BBWN Calendar

- Jan. 16 General Meeting - "Coming Out To Woman Friends", Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin St., Boston, 7:00pm
- Jan. 20 COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING, Call Sue N. day before with agenda items, call Betty A. at 731-1399 for directions (Brookline). 4pm
- Feb. 11 INTRODUCTORY MEETING, Cambridge Woman's Center, Central Square, 7:30 pm.
- Feb. 15 DEADLINE for submission of articles, classifieds ads, etc. for March/April of BBWN newsletter.
- Feb. 24 COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING, location undecided, call 731-1399 after Jan. 20 for location of this meeting.
- March 2 SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON BISEXUALITY, Old Cambridge Baptist Church, Harvard Square. Watch mail for pre-registration forms.
- March 20 GENERAL MEETING, Anyone interested in co-ordinating meeting or facilitating group; or any suggestions for topics - write BBWN or contact Jean at Jan 16th meeting. Location undecided.
- March 24 COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING, Would you like to come? Can we have it at your house?
- April 8 INTRODUCTORY at Cambridge Woman's Center Contact BBWN if interested in co-facilitating this discussion of woman newly identified as bi or just finding out about the network.
- HOPE TO SEE YOU AT SOME (or all)  
OF THESE EVENTS

YOUR NETWORK NEEDS YOUR HELP!!

The holidays have ended and it seems as though everyone still wants your money. Well, there are alot of needy women's organizations out there struggling to survive. BBWN is just one. We can always use \$\$ to help defray the cost of this newsletter and other expenses that come up. If you have a few extra bucks, feel free to send them our way. If you don't but want to help the BBWN continue, please think about contributing some of your extra time to help put the newsletter together etc. Call Betty @ 731-1399 if you want to help.

BECOME A MEMBER!

YES! SIGN ME UP! I WANT TO BE A:  
 \_\_\_ Contributing member (\$25)  
 \_\_\_ Regular member (\$10)  
 \_\_\_ Truly needy member (\$5)

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO BBWN  
THANK YOU!!

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I can help with





# BBWN

March-April, 1985

Vol. 3, No. 2 P.O. Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

## "TOWARD NEW VISIONS"

THE SECOND NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
BISEXUALITY

"...And the man in me loves the man in you/And the woman in me loves the woman in you/And the child in me loves the child in you/And the god in me — is the god in you." These were the last lines of an Amerind song: the closing song of the conference, introduced by a man who had come from Philadelphia to a gathering of an estimated 250 people.

For me, the theme of this conference was our variety. How we, as Robyn O said in her keynote address, represent all faiths, backgrounds, and lifestyles sexual and otherwise. And how despite our variety in all the areas of our lives, the danger of being even "half gay" can and does result in persecution. In a recent Supreme Court decision, she pointed out, it was decided that gay and bisexual teachers may be fired from their positions for 'advocating homosexuality.' "In other words," Robyn said, "for having a personality."

With this double-sided message — the joys of loving people without regard to gender, and the prejudice we encounter from non-bisexuals straight or gay — we entered into three workshop sessions, beginning with small groups and expanding into larger ones spread throughout the Old Baptist Church in Cambridge. All day, existing networks such as the BBWN, BBMN and Rock Against Sexism provided information and sign-up sheets. Before the conference ended, several new groups were in the making.

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## Next General Meeting

The next General Meeting of the BBWN will be held at Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin Street, Boston on Wednesday, March 20 at 7:00 p.m. The topic for discussion will be "Health Concerns of Bisexual Women." Somewhere Else is a women's space, and easily reachable by the T (Green Line to Government Center, Blue Line to Aquarium, or Orange Line to State St.) HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE -- ALL WOMEN ARE WELCOME.

## Androgynous Zones

by Peter Engel

(Excerpted from an article published in HARVARD  
MAGAZINE, Jan-Feb 1985)

It began with a boy in a dress, and before long the fashion and the fad had spread to most of America, sinking into the culture, trickling down to the masses, and gradually but steadily becoming a part of the American way of life. Perhaps this is how future generations will look back on the sexual revolution of the Eighties, a time when men were no longer men and women no longer women, when they shared an ambiguous middle ground and were wondering where to head next. The proper name for this state of affairs is androgyny, a word from the Greek meaning "man-woman," and in its current use by sociologists it signifies a kind of appearance and behavior that is not quite masculine, not quite feminine, but an uncertain and unsettling something in between.

Whether we are on our way to becoming an androgynous society is anyone's guess, but the first signs are at hand. As with other social and sexual movements, this one begins in the arts and popular culture, receiving its impetus from diverse sources in music, theater, film, and fashion. And although it is still novel, the idea of androgyny is already on its way from the artistic avant-garde into the mainstream of American culture.

The boy, of course, is The Boy, the one who dresses up in those gaudy skirts with that tawdry make-up and those tacky earrings and that stringy hair, and who still manages to pull it off with dignity. Boy George is the lead singer and co-songwriter of Culture Club, a British band that has combined jaunty rhythms and hummable melodies with inventive lyrics to produce two platinum albums and a string of American hit singles unparalleled since the Beatles. On the flip side of the coin is

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## Next C.C. Meeting

The next meeting of the BBWN Coordinating Committee will be held on Sunday, March 24, at 4:00 p.m. in Cambridge at the home of Lesley P. Call 731-1399 for directions.

The newsletter of The Boston Bisexual Women's Network



# CBS Strikes Again!

The following was sent to Morley Safer of CBS "60 Minutes":

Let's set the record straight. The majority of sexually abusive parents in this country are heterosexual, not homosexual. Present estimates are that 8 out of every 10 girls and 5 out of every 10 boys will be sexually abused before reaching adulthood. The girls, almost without exception, will be abused by a male relative or family friend. Yet these abused children do not resort to killing their abusers. Nationwide campaigns now underway are educating children that there is a way to get help. Witness the prime-time TV movie "Something About Amelia," as well as outreach in the public schools.

In your report broadcast on February 17, you refer to the Indian youth as having been "homosexually abused" by his father. As bisexual women sensitive to the language of sexual labeling, we take issue with your misuse of the word "homosexually." The boy was sexually abused. Why identify his abuser with an entire community of homosexuals who are good citizens and loving parents? Sexual violation of a boy by a man is not ipso facto "homosexual" abuse.

I contend that you would not have had a story if the adoptive father (a) had sexually abused a daughter, or (b) had been married and sexually abused a son -- for the simple reason that in neither case would you have concluded the father was gay. Yet neither (a) nor (b) precludes the father's being gay.

What your story rests on is the conclusion, stated without clear evidence, that an unmarried adoptive father sexually abusing his son is gay. This conclusion is untrue and unfair. Parents who sexually abuse their same-sex children may be cruel, violent, or criminally insane -- but not by extension homosexual. And homosexuals who choose same-sex, consenting adult lovers may be parents, godparents, aunts or uncles -- but not by extension sexual abusers of their children. Yet, you state prescriptively that "alarm bells" should go off when any unmarried, possibly gay person seeks to adopt. Disguising such alarmist preconceptions as investigative journalism is reckless and misinformed. It could destroy what shreds remain of "equal opportunity" in the adoption process for qualified single people, while reinforcing the die-hard myth that homosexuals are child molesters.

You reported that the father kept "homosexual magazines" around the house. Since you're using this fact to help illustrate the "depravity" of the scene of the crime, the viewing audience can only assume you're referring to pornographic magazines. Once again, to label them homosexual is untrue and unfair. When is the last time you, Mr. Safer, took a look at some of the newspapers, magazines and literary journals written and published by homosexuals? I assure you it is "clean," intelligent work. I particularly

recommend the Gay Community News produced weekly here in Boston and distributed to subscribers and newsstands across the country; I'd be surprised if a number of CBS employees, perhaps even a personal friend of yours, didn't read this "homosexual magazine" regularly.

When I have children (whether I bear my own or adopt them seems irrelevant), I fully intend to leave gay literature within their reach. I want them to learn about the long history and rich culture of the homosexual community. I want them to know my pride in my identity -- and my hope is that they will come to have the same comfort and pride in their identity.

I challenge you to take a closer look at your own homophobia. Try doing a "60 Minutes" piece in which the story is not contained in your leading questions but rather in the words of those you are interviewing.

Why not do a piece on the most talked-about subject among lesbians today: Having children. Why not talk with lesbians who have chosen to adopt or have their own children and let them, rather than yourself, come before the camera and let their integrity shine through. I guarantee it would make good journalism. Groundbreaking research for such a report has already been made by two independent women filmmakers who recently completed a film called "Choosing Children." I hope you have the opportunity to see this film, and to make that perspective on "homosexual parenting" available to your audience.

-- Megan M, Sylvia S

## NEWSLETTER STAFF FOR THIS ISSUE:

Lesley P, editor; Paula J, assistant editor & layout; Cathy J, Elissa M, Sylvia S, contributing editors; Elissa M, typing; Betty A, editorial advisor.

## HELP, HELP, HELP!!

Jean K., who has generously handled Newsletter layout and graphics, is on vacation for several months. Someone who can replace her in this vital task is urgently needed. WE KNOW THAT OUR NEW LAYOUT ARTIST IS OUT THERE -- WILL SOMEONE PLEASE TELL US WHO SHE IS? Call Betty at 731-1399 with the news.

## BODYWORKS



MARGARITA ASCENCIO  
576-1493

53 RIVER STREET, CAMBRIDGE, NR CENTRAL SQUARE (T)



## Almost Out

She stalked towards me from the woods,  
brandishing a cattail.  
She handed it to me and spoke of  
childhood woodsy memories.  
I smile-squinted up at her in the warm  
Maryland sun.

(The guards at the palace gate were  
drowsy...)

"Do you think I've copped out?" I asked.  
"Oh no, not you. I meant people who love  
exclusively their own sex. You've got  
lots of experiences behind you, you've  
got a wonderful dear friend, you've got a  
nice job and a nice life."

"Don't you think it's better for a woman  
to love another woman than to love a  
battering man?" (I wince as I talk,  
inside.)

"Well...sure."

"I have experimented, and in terms of my  
decade and the city where I live --  
much differently than, say, your  
experimenting."

(One guard opens an eye and furrows a  
brow.)

"We don't owe anyone our intimate  
details. They're private."

(The guards stand at attention, hands  
on swords.)

"Mother! Listen! You told me of your  
premarital abortion. Can't I tell you  
that my 'dear friend' was once my lover  
for years? And that it is as much a part  
of who I am as your blood is? And that  
it was not an experiment or a phase -- it  
was a relentless demand to place a piece  
from a childhood puzzle snugly into my  
psyche?"

These last words were never spoken.

Not for fear of the guards,

But because coming out can also be a  
selfish thing.

--Marcia D.

## A POTLUCK DINNER!

There will be a potluck dinner for all\*  
members of BBWN on Saturday, May 18, at  
7:00 p.m. at the home of Terry M. in  
Somerville, in celebration of (believe it  
or not!) Armed Forces Day. (For details  
as to what to bring and/or directions,  
call 731-1399). After dinner, all will  
repair to Somewhere Else for dancing  
etcetera -- if you can't make it in time  
for dinner, meet us there at 10:00 p.m.  
Be disarming. (\*C'mon, ya'all -- let's  
have hundreds of you show up, and teach  
Terry a lesson about volunteering!)



**BETH WALSH**

MASSAGE POLARITY

576-1493

(617) 623-7258

## MINUTES OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING OF 2/24/85

The C.C. meeting took place at Terry's  
home, starting a little late because of a  
serious three-car accident out front.  
Fortunately no C.C. members were involved  
except as witnesses.

The following topics were discussed:

1. The "Women in Conflict" conference at  
U. Mass./Boston, which Betty A is  
helping to organize. The date is Sat.  
March 16th, Mary Daly is the keynote  
speaker, and the BBWN will staff an  
information table in shifts.
2. Thank you's: Sylvia will write letters  
to Somewhere Else and the Women's  
Center, thanking them for letting BBWN  
use their space for free. It was also  
agreed that we would donate \$25 to the  
Women's Center.
3. Newsletter stuffing dates were set:  
March 11 and April 29.
4. Treasury report: BBWN account balance  
now \$525. \$72.05 due back from  
regional BiConference.
5. The next general meeting will focus on  
"The Health Concerns of Bisexual  
Women," with a guest speaker from the  
AIDS Action Committee. March 20, 7PM,  
upstairs at Somewhere Else. Calendar  
announcements are already out, and  
posters will be distributed.
6. Conference report from Terry and  
Robyn.  
-- March 2  
-- 60 people registered, but 200 or  
more expected to attend  
-- there will be craftswomen and  
entertainment, with Blackbird  
Kitchen catering lunch.
7. Gay Pride plans  
-- date: June 15th  
-- BBWN will have T-shirts and like  
last year a brunch before the  
march; Sylvia will facilitate.  
-- Nadine, new C.C. member, will be  
meeting regularly with Pride Day  
organizers.
8. Social events. Discussed these  
possibilities:  
• a screening of "Choosing Children"  
• a performance by Tracy Chapman  
• a potluck dinner: planned for May 18  
at Terry's  
• a fundraiser for the Seneca Women's  
Peace Encampment
9. Brief discussion of recent "60 Minutes"  
broadcast in which Morley Safer made a  
case against unmarried people adopting  
children, gay-baiting throughout.  
C.C. considered signing letter by  
Sylvia & Megan M after further  
editing.

(we miss you already)

HAPPY  
TRAILS

TO JEAN



The morning workshops centered around affinity groups: Women-, Men-, and Bi-identified, Older, Younger, "Married," Single, Jewish men and women, Allies of Bisexuals, and a mixed discussion group. Forming encounter-group circles, we filled the dining area, the Sanctuary, and Parish Hall.

I chose the Singles affinity group. Our first step was to define ourselves and say why we were here. Some of us were happy being single; some were not. We paired off to discuss with our partners the good and bad aspects of being single-and-bisexual, how we saw ourselves in this role, and our hopes for the future. When we rejoined each other, we shared our findings. Overwhelmingly, our common experience lay in how we were seen by others regardless of their sexual orientation. Responses ranged from our being called "confused" to having our very integrity threatened, seen as "turncoats" against a unidirectional, "loyal" sexual orientation. Each of us had different personal timetables for coming out to a friend or lover, ranging from opening remarks to the beginnings of intimacy. Each of us placed our bisexuality within the context of the rest of our lives, emphasizing our own sexuality or asexuality in varying degrees.

Before we adjourned, we chose "buddies" — people with whom we'd keep in touch throughout the day, familiar faces. As lunch was sold in the dining area, complimentary doughnuts and coffee were cleared in the Parish Hall to make way for craftspeople and their wares. Informal discussions continued during lunch and friendships were forged.

The Church provided a kind of sanctuary for all of us. We knew why we were all here and knew who we were. We were a small pocket of bisexuals and friends of bisexuals in a world of uncertainty about who is what. Rather than having to cope with double standards, paranoia and "sufficient discretion" and the territory that comes with societal stigma, we were in a safe haven, a house of acceptance. Being ourselves was easier in a place like this, and being ourselves was a mutually supported and supportive activity. This was the first time I had been with both bisexual women and men, with access to viewpoints from both genders. And that gave me a very satisfying feeling.

After lunch, we grouped into "Dialogues" that covered each aspect of our sexuality: Choosing a Bisexual Lifestyle, Healthy Bisexual Relationships, Women Relating to Women, Women Relating to Men, Men Relating to Men, Men Relating to Women, and Men and Women Relating to Each Other. I chose the last of these, although I had to leave it to join another part of the conference: participation as a volunteer. This was asked of all attendees, and included either security, clean-up, or staying at information or registration desks. What did happen at the dialogue before I left, were summaries of societal teachings that (a) deprived women of their power or, worse, brainwashed them into depriving themselves and each other of that power; and (b) deprived men of showing and sharing their feelings or, worse, depriving them of the ability to recognize those feelings.

The third set of workshops dealt with Bisexual networks (both building and maintaining them, locally and/or nationally); taking our place in the Lesbian/Gay and Heterosexual communities, Developing and Supporting Friends and Allies, Bisexual Pride, AIDS, and Writing and Publishing a Book on Bisexuality.

I chose this last topic. I had come to this conference looking for other writers. This group included not only writers, but people who supported the project and offered help in other, equally important areas involved in putting a book together.

Each of us came to this workshop with different preconceptions. Should there be a book by women only? men and women? Should its contents be restricted to those of us in the group or should we reach further? If we reached further, should we limit that reach? include all regions of the U.S. and beyond? include all racial, ethnic, special interest, other groups? Should we concentrate on coming-out stories and poetry or include studies and editorials? And last but not least, how would we fund such a venture? How would we spread the word that such a project was underway?

We decided that our first step was to brainstorm. Among us, we represented Boston, New York, Connecticut, and Canada. We passed around a sheet and contributed postage for the mailing of an address list; then divided ourselves into representative groups, each with a coordinator. Within groups, we would brainstorm about content, publicity, funding, and other project details, and then share the information gathered and generated, between groups. We agreed that we might end up with material for not one but several books, each with its own focus. Before we broke, we set the beginning of May as our target date for a general meeting. For the Boston group, our first meeting will take place on March 21. Call Elissa M at 935-8315, if you would like to join us, or if you are interested in getting together in a mixed-gender poets and writers workshop, to meet informally and share writing.

After dinner, we were treated to a variety of stunning performances in the Sanctuary. I forget names (and apologize!), but what I heard, clapped to, and sang along with will remain with me for quite some time. More than one performer remarked that here at the Conference, they could sing the songs in their repertoire that would be "chancy" elsewhere. And each song was inspirational.

We danced until midnight, with beer, sandwiches and cider available to close the evening. All in all, the coordinators of this conference, liaisons between the committee and the church, emcees, facilitators, performers, and everyone else involved including all participants, made for a spectacular day. The conference was not without debate, but I saw much more tolerance than intolerance. We recognized our differences and, like our sexuality, saw them as adding to our own variety rather than conflicting with each other. In the midst of whatever hardships we have encountered, this day we worked with each other to preserve our gift of loving people for who they are regardless of gender. Kudos to one and all!

— Elissa M

(This report has also been sent to the BBMN.)

Please send your impressions, analysis, poetry, etc. on the Conference for the next issue of the newsletter. Deadline is 10 April. Address: BBW Newsletter P.O. Box 1534, Jamaica Plain MA 02130



Dear BBWN,

I loved Betty A's editorial in the Jan-Feb '85 issue! I could've written it myself except for one change -- the word "lesbian" to "straight." Doesn't that say something about our network? I think we both have a home here, Betty!

When I call myself a bisexual, it lets people in on my history and it usually opens up a rather interesting conversation. I intend to always have friends of all sexes and sexualities, and my place in the group is unique. One week, I may raise an eyebrow, and the next week, someone who trusts our common "half" may come to me with questions.

Most of my women friends who came out in their twenties have settled, in their thirties, into either a lesbian or a straight life, with few conflicts. And, there do seem to be fewer questions in this age range. Because I experience cycles of sexual and emotional tugs, and because I love being a "bridge" of sexual politics, BBWN is for me. I hope that women in their twenties will use BBWN as a safe "deciding" place, and that many will stay, no matter what they decide. We are no longer "digital" -- gay or straight -- there are three (at least!) choices. Knowing that I was a human and not a digital computer would've saved me a lot of time and trouble. In 1980, I resolved to find out "who I was" sexually. I tried beautiful men ("my type" in fantasies) with unfamiliar politics and ethics. Wrong. I seem to demand an ethical component in physical attraction. I tried a gay "Fear of Coming Out" class. Wrong. I fell in love with two of the gay men (who fell in love with each other). Luckily, or through the grace of the Goddess, the Women's Center introductory on Bisexuality in 1982, followed by the Bivocals and the BBWN, ended my search very happily.

--Marcia D

Dear BBWN,

Just learned of your existence in Bay Windows. I've known I was 'bi' for years, but no one understands what makes us tick unless they share our attraction to women/men. Please send information -- I will send a check to cover any costs for your newsletter. Congratulations for coming out and thanks for extending yourselves to isolated people like me!

--[name withheld by request]

TELEPHONE (617) 498-9923

**BET MACARTHUR, ACSW LICSW**  
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CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Dear BBWN,

First of all, Action Bi-Women sends compliments to BBWN on your newsletter, which gets better and better each issue!

Your January/February newsletter made mention of a decision to title your newsletter Bi-Lines. As you may know, this is the same title as ABW's newsletter. Since the community of Bisexual women's groups across the country is relatively small, we're concerned about the confusion that might result if two of the groups have newsletters with the same name. We're therefore wondering if you would possibly reconsider that decision????

We've been avidly reading your newsletter over the past year. Since your group is somewhat more "experienced" than ours, we find that you're often several steps ahead of us in many aspects. We've really appreciated having your network as a role model for us. Thanks.

-- Pat H

[Ed. note -- Well, people, what do you think -- should this decision be reconsidered? Would the two groups' newsletters having the same name be a problem? Or would it be seen as a sign of our unity across the country?]

Dear BBWN,

I really enjoy reading your fascinating newsletter! Thank you for letting women like me be part of the Network, who hardly ever come to meetings but want to get the newsletter.

-- Betsy D

Dear BBWN,

Sorry for not answering sooner -- guess it slipped my mind. Please keep me on your mailing list even though I am out of state. Here in Minneapolis, even though there is a sizeable lesbian community, there is no support group or network for bi women. You guys keep me in touch. Thanks for knowing you're there and keep up the good work!

-- Beth S

## WOMEN OVER 35 -- WHERE ARE YOU?

Women over 35 who are interested in getting together in any way -- write to Barbara, c/o BBWN Newsletter (P.O. Box 1534, J.P., MA 02130), and let us know when and where we can reach you.

134 Hampshire St. Cambridge, MA.  
wine & beer

**BREADS** patio  
soups-desserts  
salads

**MODERN TIMES**  
Sat./Sun  
brunch

354-8371



Eurythmics' mannish lead singer, Annie Lennox, a beacon of sensuality in tie and jacket, suspenders, and close-cropped, safety-flare orange hair. Equally androgynous, and even more erogenous, are some of their fellow musicians from both sides of the Atlantic: Michael Jackson, Grace Jones, Phil Oakey of the Human League, Pete Burns of Dead or Alive, performance artist Laurie Anderson, Marilyn (a man), and veteran sexual polymorph David Bowie.

Broadway and Hollywood have had their share of androgynes as well. *La Cage Aux Folles*, last year's Tony award-winning best musical by Harvey Fierstein and Jerry Herman, concerns an aging drag queen's painful process of self-examination and his ultimate victory over sexual discrimination, a conquest affirmed in the powerful first-act finale, "I Am What I Am." That a musical about a male transvestite would sell out a Broadway theater is surprising enough, but stranger still is the continued polarity of Fierstein's three-act, four-hour drama about homosexual love, *Torch Song Trilogy*, which won the 1983 Tony for best play. A runaway Off Broadway hit was Caryl Churchill's *Cloud 9*, which ridiculed the pretense of Victorian propriety, reducing it to a kind of pansexual pandemonium. In Churchill's satire, an African explorer drops in at his friend's colonial estate and seduces the friend's wife (portrayed by a man), his school-age son (portrayed by a woman), and his black servant (portrayed by a white), before ultimately marrying his governess — a lesbian.

Such recent movies as *Tootsie*, *Yentl*, *Victor/Victoria*, and the film version of *La Cage Aux Folles* also deal explicitly with sexual masquerade and gender role-reversal; all four feature plot contortions in which one character is inadvertently attracted to another of the same sex. New-wave films such as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *Liquid Sky* go even further. In the cult classic *Rocky Horror*, a winsome young couple stumbles upon a haunted house inhabited by a mad scientist/rock-and-roll singer/transvestite, who seduces them (separately, and on the same night) and ultimately wins them over to the cause. In the orgasmo-hallucinatory *Liquid Sky*, a single actress plays two characters (one male and one female, both the complexion of Andy Warhol) who make love to each other; in one scene he/she declares that she/he is "truly as androgynous as David Bowie himself."

In fashion, the signs are everywhere. There is no mistaking the significance of the Boy George look-alike contests, the Greenwich Village new-wavers with painted faces and cropped hair, the angular and ambisexual Japanese robes that hover in store windows like so many black bats, or the ninety-foot-tall woman wearing the twenty-foot-wide pair of men's briefs in Times Square (the Calvin Klein billboard was recently painted over). All in all, it seems safe to say that he/she is no longer just a personal pronoun but a real flesh-and-blood member of the arts.

Simple truths about androgyny are hard to find. It may be programmed in our genes — or it may not. It may be connected to homosexuality or bisexuality, or it may not. Western society may be moving toward a more and more androgynous state, or androgyny today may be the last vestige of a practice common in ancient civilizations. The diversity of its manifestations in the arts suggests that androgyny in America has no single origin and no

single form of expression. It ranges from true bisexuality to the mere existence in a man or woman of traits considered more appropriate to the opposite sex. But there is a connection between these two extremes. Not every male chauvinist who admires the singing of Boy George will want to wear a dress, but perhaps the next time he meets a masculine woman or an effeminate man, he will be a shade more tolerant of their behavior....

If the theater, because of its limited seating and prohibitive prices, causes only glacial change, the fashion world, with its constant exposure in every store window and TV program and magazine, provokes a revolution practically every year. Nothing dates so quickly as a trouser cut, a tie width, or a hemline. "Remember, there was a time when women didn't wear trousers, blazers, neckties, or suspenders, all the articles of clothing that used to be labeled 'masculine,'" observes Pam Gau, president of Calvin Klein's underwear division, the one that has been marketing both boxer shorts and men's briefs for women. "Now women jump in and out of the man's wardrobe all the time. I think that androgyny has been on the verge of arriving for a long while, and now it's finally exposed and open. Our underwear line is one of the reflections of that change."

Another reflection is evident at Einstein's, a shop in New York's East Village, where something stranger than women in men's underwear awaits visitors. Attending to customers inside the small, iridescent green boutique are its two co-owners and designers, Julia Morton and Paul Monroe. One is in a white, belted pullover dress, white tennis shoes, bleached blond hair, a heavy dose of eyeliner, metallic green fingernails, and a rhinestone earring like a small chandelier hanging from the right ear, the other in a black dinner jacket and dark gray pants, a button-down gray shirt, black leather shoes, and a shock of turquoise hair. The odd thing is that he wears the dress and she wears the suit. It is clear enough what makes Einstein's unique: Morton and Monroe make dresses for men.

"We're not advocating that men should become women, or that women should become men," says Morton, showing off a white cotton pullover like a Roman tunic, a blue velvet chemise, a beige cotton jersey that hangs to the knees, and a black silk slip-on, the ultimate in comfort.

continued on page 7

Special Thanks to Terry & Steve  
for all their work in organizing  
the Conference. Great Job!

## WE KNOW YOU KNOW

that SOJOURNER is Boston's women's newspaper. But do you subscribe? If so, then you get the paper much faster—and give us much-needed support. So why not arrange to get the news, calendar listings, and other wonderful things we offer before they're available on newsstands? Just send your name and address (and \$11) to: SOJOURNER, 143 Albany St., Cambridge, MA 02139. Your writing, photos, and ads are also welcome, of course; just call 661-3567 for details.



The dresses are designed to accommodate the male physique, cut wide in the shoulders, long in the torso, slim in the hips. They are playfully adorned with printed patterns, strips of colored fabric, plastic gemstones, and lots of bucket-sized pockets. Morton returns the clothes to the rack and continues her discourse on fashion. "We want to show that the traditions we've been brought up on have nothing to do with reality. Fashion is just a game we play, and to call a pair of pants masculine or a dress feminine is absurd. It's all fabric. Why do men wear a tie? It doesn't serve any function — it's purely for decoration. And yet God forbid that they should go out without one."

In three years of making and selling men's and women's dresses, Morton and Monroe have cultivated a sizable and diverse clientele that includes artists and accountants, students and stockbrokers, from twenty to sixty. Some businessmen wear their dresses to work, but the clothes get their greatest use at home and at nightclubs or resorts. And as far as the designers can tell, the men who buy them are not transvestites, not homosexuals, and not particularly effeminate. Monroe explains that any man who can wear a dress must be sure enough of his identity not to care about the judgment of the rest of society. One of his inspirations was the movie *The Ten Commandments*. "After the movie was shown on TV," he says, "guys were coming in here saying, 'I saw that movie and that guy looked great in a dress. I want to try one on.'" The question is, are they man enough to wear one?

"The first time men try on a dress," says Morton, "it's a frightening experience for them, in the same way as when a man's wife goes off to work and he has to take care of the baby for the first time. But once you've done it, you see that you can deal with it, and it's not so horrendous. It looks as though Macy's is going to pick them up now, and even though that may seem shocking today, in twenty years we'll yawn and talk about when we first had dresses for men. By then they'll be trite. We take our clothing so seriously now, but in a hundred years we'll say, 'We're making a film about 1984. Go get costumes.'"

But Macy's! If the world's largest department store is going to start selling dresses for men, then surely the androgynous revolution is out of the closet and into the street. At Macy's women's fashion director Terry Melville was in the process of organizing a window display of female mannequins dressed in men's jackets and shoes and a multicolored array of boxer shorts — polka-dot, striped, paisley, foulard. The decision to stock traditional designs like those of Pierre Cardin or to take a chance on the new androgynous styles, like dresses for men, falls on Melville: Pierre, or the ambiguities? Melville confirms that she is considering selling Morton and Monroe's dresses for men and expands on what the impact of that choice would be.

The dresses would be included in Macy's trend-setting Innovators shop, a high-exposure showcase which already includes other designs by Morton and Monroe and which manufacturers will visit before making their selections for the coming season's line. Within four months, the designs in Innovators might appear as mass merchandise in Macy's other departments and in comparable stores elsewhere on the East and West coasts. In another two months or so, the more cosmopolitan shops of the South and West would

have produced their own versions with the colors, shapes, and patterns toned down. And less than nine months after their Macy's debut, the designs would be available in practically every part of the country. The process, Melville explains, is one of habituation. "People look at the wild and crazy clothing in our windows," she says. "The more they see it, the more they get used to it. So when they come into the store six months later and see it on the rack — they buy it."

It will certainly be a while before the full impact of androgyny in the arts is felt across America, and it will take even longer for completely androgynous behavior to evolve from an act of rebellion into an acceptable way of life. But the time lag grows shorter and shorter between the King's Road club, the Off Broadway workshop, the Soho film studio, the Shinjuku fashion salon, and the homes and lives of 240 million Americans. As this article goes to press, Culture Club has just released its third album, Fierstein is adapting *Torch Song Trilogy* for the screen, Prince's film *Purple Rain* is being seen by millions of viewers across the country, and Melville is deciding whether Macy's should stock dresses for men.

Already the first reverberations are being felt, along with the first stirrings of social upheaval. At the Harvard pre-school where anthropologist McCabe has been sending her son, a four-year-old boy has come to school in a skirt. Apparently he had seen a picture in a book of a boy who liked to dress up in costumes, and when he asked his mother for a skirt, she went out and bought it. "Here is a group of liberal and well-educated parents, many of them professors, who are committed to cutting down on sexual stereotyping," says McCabe, "and they thought it was just too weird." The result — among the parents, at least — has been an uproar.

It began with a boy in a dress, and before long ... Controversy.



## Community Calendar

March 16 "A Common Goal: A Common Dream." 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., at the College of Community and Public Service, U. Mass. (Boston), Arlington and Stuart Sts. (Arlington T Stop). A conference on conflict in women's lives, sponsored by the CPCS Women's Support Group: morning workshops, keynote speaker Mary Daly at 1:30 p.m. Admission free, day care provided, accessible, interpreted for the hearing impaired.

March 22 Kate Wolf in Concert, at Paine Hall, Harvard University. For information call 491-8334.

April 15 Ferron in Concert, at Symphony Hall.

April 26 Katie Cannon in "Sojourneys," a series of programs on radical women of color. For information call Women's Theological Center, 277-1330.



March 20 GENERAL MEETING - Discussion topic: "Health Concerns of Bisexual Women." Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin St., Boston, 7:00 p.m.

March 24 COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING, At Lesley's. Call 492-8001 the day before with agenda items, or for directions (Cambridge). 4:00 p.m.

April 8 INTRODUCTORY MEETING, Cambridge Women's Center, Central Square, 7:30 p.m.

April 10 DEADLINE for submission of articles, letters, classified ads, etc. for May/June issue of BBWN Newsletter.

April 28 COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING, at Robyn's, 7:30 p.m.

April 29 NEWSLETTER STUFFING, at Robyn's, 7:30 p.m.

May 18 POT-LUCK DINNER, at Terry's. Call 731-1399 for directions and/or suggestions as to what to bring. Dancing after dinner at Somewhere Else -- if you can't make it to dinner, meet us there at 10 p.m.

May 28 GENERAL MEETING, at Somewhere Else, 7:00 p.m.

June 2 COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING, at Sylvia's. Call 731-1399 for directions.

June 10 INTRODUCTORY MEETING, Cambridge Women's Center.

June 30 COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING, at Robyn's.

**NEW WORDS**  
A WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE

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## BI-CONNECTIONS

Introductions by mail for bisexual women. Friendship, romance, support groups, business contacts. Long SASE to P.O. Box 193, Kendall Sq., Cambridge, MA 02142.

The love of my life, a female bisexual silver tabby, needs a good home. I just moved to an apartment where she is an illegal occupant. Please help! Call Robyn at 491-8334.

Woman, 31, would like to join support group for women 25-35. Write to Jan c/o BBWN.

Any women interested in joining a bisexual women's support group, please contact Nadine at 353-6032, 10 p.m. to midnight.

21 year old woman, new in area, seeks person to look for a home together. nonsmoker, reasonably neat, cat-lover, seeks same. Call Marge 1-877-9355.

DOES THIS HOUSEHOLD EXIST? I am looking for a house of 5-6 people, men and women, who represent or support lesbian, gay and bisexual lifestyles. Do you know of such homes? Call if you have any leads or encouraging thoughts. 776-7406, Martha.

ROOMMATE(S) SOUGHT to share attractively furnished 6-room house (own bedroom) in safe, pleasant and convenient country-like neighborhood in Fresh Pond section of Cambridge. Must be cat-tolerant. Call Lesley, 492-8001.

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individual, couple and group counseling for Women

"Towards New Visions", the second regional conference on Bisexuality, was a huge success thanks to all the organizers, facilitators, and participants from all over the country. The BBWN thanks everyone for their individual donations of time and energy. Since the conference, our mailing list has increased. If you could possibly send the network a few extra bucks to help defray the cost of our mailings, it would be greatly appreciated.

YES! SIGN ME UP! I WANT TO BE A:  
☐ Contributing member (\$25)  
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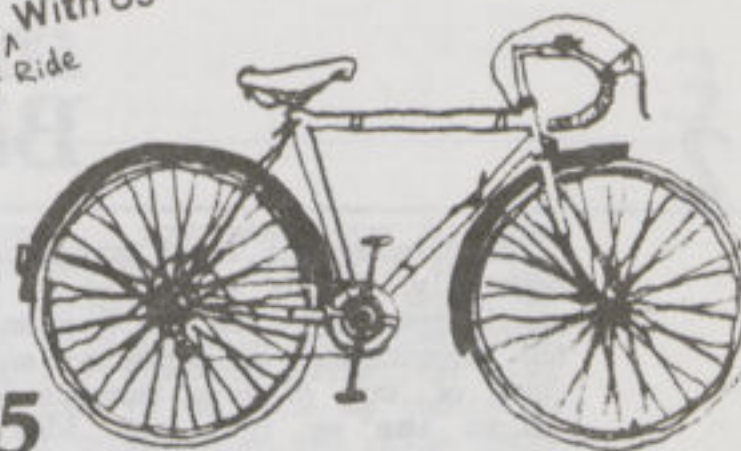
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO BBWN  
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 PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_  
 I can help with \_\_\_\_\_





LESBIAN-GAY<sup>+</sup> PRIDE 1985  
Come March With Us  
or Ride



# BBWN

May-June, 1985

Vol. 3, No. 3 P.O. Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

## Disturbing Precedent

Excerpted from The New York Times 2-26-85

The Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal by a public high school guidance counselor who lost her job as a result of disclosing to her co-workers that she was bisexual.

The Court, as is its custom, gave no explanation for its refusal to take the case. Two Justices, William J. Brennan, Jr. and Thurgood Marshall, voted to hear the appeal, and, in a pointed 11-page opinion, argued that the question of homosexual rights "raises serious and unsettled constitutional questions" that "cannot any longer be ignored."

But four votes are needed for the Court to accept a case. The fact that the case drew the interest of only the two most liberal Justices indicated that the Supreme Court is unlikely to take up the issue any time soon.

The guidance counselor, Marjorie H. Rowland, sued the Mad River school district in Ohio, saying the district had violated her constitutional rights of free speech and equal protection. The district had refused to renew her contract after she described herself as bisexual to several colleagues and administrators.

A Federal District Court jury awarded her \$56,000 in damages, finding that Miss Rowland was dismissed as a direct result of speech — discussion of her sexual attitude — that was entitled to constitutional protection. The jury found that Miss Rowland's speech had not had a disruptive effect within the school and that she had performed her professional duties properly.

But the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit overturned the jury's verdict, concluding that the school district violated none of the employee's constitutional rights.

continued on page 7

## Next General Meeting

The next General Meeting of BBWN will be held upstairs at Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin St. Boston, on Tuesday, May 28 at 7 PM. The topic for discussion will be "Lesbian-Gay Pride is Our Pride, Too." Somewhere Else is a woman's space and easily reachable by the T (Green Line to Gov't. Center, Blue Line to Aquarium, Orange Line to State, Red Line to South Station). Hope to see you there - All Women Are Welcome.

## Reflections on Love & Language

The Second Annual Regional Conference on Bisexuality took place on a warm, sunny Saturday in early March. Hundreds of bisexual women and men from all over the Northeast spent the day doing workshops, socializing, philosophizing, and partying. For many of us it was the first time we had a chance to openly address this very important part of our identity in a large group. Given the diversity of the participants, I doubt that any hard and fast conclusions about the nature of bisexuality could have been drawn at the end of the day, that that was not the purpose. We had the chance to talk to others like ourselves, and to raise issues that were important. A few issues stood out for me.

Language.

There was a great deal of discussion about and discontent with the word "bisexual." Some did not like the word because it had "sex" in it and therefore overemphasized the sexual aspect of our lives; this is a problem particularly because bisexuality has too often been associated with promiscuity, random sleeping with whatever crosses one's path. The label also paints the false (to my mind) picture that there are three kinds of people in the world: Gays, Straights and Bis. Many feel that this view is limited because it separates us from the two other groups, with whom we in fact feel very connected. The label often invokes the false stereotype that bis are undecided about their sexuality, shallow and uncommitted, forever skipping back and forth between two kinds of lovers — when we know that the depth and quality of our relationships is the same as everyone else's. There is the strong desire to free ourselves of labels altogether, to be seen as whole people rather than bisexuals, with all the negative stereotypes that the word seems to drag along with it.

continued on page 4

## Next C.C. Meeting

The next meeting of the BBWN Coordinating Committee will be held on Sunday, June 2 at 4 PM in Cambridge at the home of Sylvia S. Call 731-1399 for directions.

The newsletter of The Boston Bisexual Women's Network



## Bi's On The Move

This marks the first appearance of what will hopefully become a permanent feature of the newsletter. Bi's on the Move attempts to track the adventures, achievements and miscellaneous news of our diverse membership. Since this column was my brilliant idea, I am taking responsibility for writing it for the next couple of issues. But, come August, I too will be a bi on the move. I'll be going to graduate school in Los Angeles. So, I'll be looking for a successor in a couple of months. In the meantime, Jean K has been busy sending us postcards from such exotic places as Fiji, on her way to Australia where she will be living for the next six months or so. Good luck, Jean; we look forward to interesting bits of news from our foreign correspondent! Kate K has published the Banca Directory, a compilation of the Central America network of various groups and agencies. The publication is available in selected bookstores around town or from Kate directly. Please call her at: 576-2455. Sarah M from Burlington, VT has just left on a six month journey to Greece and the Middle East. Tamara B, founder of New York Bi Women has just returned from six months in Mexico. On the home front, Robyn O has been working on various productions for Concord concerts. See the Calendar section for details. Diane and Joanna A led a workshop on Bisexuality at the NEWSA conference in March. Congratulations to Charnan B for her new social work job. She's working at an agency with Kate K. Finally, BBWN welcomes [redacted] to Boston from Santa Barbara, California. She did a great job as volunteer coordinator at the conference. Well, in order for this column to exist, I need to receive news from all of you out there. Please send any information, comments, etc. to me c/o BBWN at the P.O. box. Thanks until next time!

— Terry M

### Beth Hook, BBWN Member, Goes to Nicaragua

This summer a group of men and women from the Boston area are going to the Nicaraguan town of Esteli to build a health care facility. It will serve six neighborhoods (approximately 5000 people) in an area where currently there is only one hospital, where people stand on line for hours to get in, any many children die before the age of five.

This is a project that the Nicaraguans themselves started. A woman from Boston, Natalie Zimmerman, who was in Esteli for a couple of months, came back to the States to get support for the project. Through friends she connected up with Steve Norris, a politically concerned contractor who was already in the process of forming a construction brigade to go to Nicaragua but who had no specific project in mind.

Called the Vecino (Neighbor) Construction Brigade, group members are paying their own way. All tools, all building supplies like pipes, fixtures, and plumbing, and all medical supplies will be brought to the States. The group is going in June and July to join the Nicaraguans who are already working on clearing the site and making bricks.

Beth Hook, of BBWN, is going with the Brigade as a carpenter. Any support from BBWN members in the form of donations of hand tools, money or just moral support is welcome! Please call Beth at 522-8538 or write, 11 Dresden St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. Call Joanna at 731-6602 if you can't reach Beth.

Dear BBWN,

Wanted to let you know that we did it! Yeah! We proposed a workshop called BISEXUALITY: ANOTHER OPTION IN LOVING for the New England Women's Studies Association Ninth Annual Conference. The conference was on "Feminist Perspectives on Sexuality" and we didn't want bi to be left out! Our proposal was approved and 36 women came to the workshop.

It went well ... nerves and all it was fun. We had Betsy Rose's "Room for You" playing as people walked in and had daffodils on our handout table which included the Oct '83 Globe article on Bisexuality (reprinted in a BBWN newsletter a while back) as well as the latest BBWN newsletter. (Thanks!)

As usual, many attendees expressed relief at having a safe space for exploring their issues around Bisexuality. There was lots of interest in BBWN ... memberships should be coming in!

Love, Joanna A and Linda B

p.s. Glad Day Books, 43 Winter St. Boston has several books on bisexuality. One that we found to be quite good is called Barry and Alice: Portrait of a Bisexual Marriage. It has a feminist perspective, is personable and readable.

### NEWSLETTER STAFF FOR THIS ISSUE:

Paula J, editor & layout; Ruth L, assistant editor & layout; Elissa M, typing; Betty A, advertisements.

### BE PROUD

#### Lesbian-Gay Pride Is Our Pride Too

So come march with us on June 15. We will meet for brunch (\$3 all you can eat) at 565 Boylston St. (Community Church of Boston) from 10-noon and then join the parade. All friends and allies welcome. Let's show everyone by our numbers and enthusiasm that we are proud, too.

#### LESBIAN-GAY PRIDE MARCHING BAND

Take your instruments out of the closet and play with us during the March and beyond. See GCN or Bay Windows for more info.

#### BBWN to have summer intern

This summer BBWN will have an intern to help with much of the work that tends to be ignored among the more mundane tasks of maintaining the network. Her name is Hannah; she is currently at Wesleyan Univ. in CT, but grew up in Brookline. She will be concentrating on fundraising and planning for the retreat. Those of us who already know Hannah are looking forward to having her with us and those of you who are not yet acquainted with her have a special treat in store.



## Profile of a Support Group

I am in a support group. I don't quite know why I joined, though the desire to meet other women who actually admitted that they were bisexual was a pretty strong reason. I didn't know any before that, and thought that I was a little strange in taking so long to decide whether or not I was really gay. I'm not sure why others joined. I think some joined to make new friends, some to find others like themselves ... I don't think anyone joined for sex and no one has gotten it. Almost.

So now I meet with nine other women every Sunday night, and none of us are in any hurry to decide whether or not we are really gay. In fact, we may never decide, since we now know that you don't have to make such dumb decisions anyway.

One might wonder, What Do They Do every Sunday night for hours and hours. Well, the first thing we do is pour tea. Sometimes we have more elaborate little feasts, with chocolates, doughnuts, juice, or birthday cakes. But we always pour tea. After that, we each do our weeks. This means that each of us in turn talks about what has happened in the days since we last met. Some have a trauma every week; some never have a trauma at all; some make a trauma in order to have something entertaining for the group. Sometimes a woman reports about herself in a detached way. But sometimes she is very much involved in the struggle that she is going through and it is at such times that she is most open to support that the rest are there to provide. The others listen attentively, and offer advice, humor, and related experiences of our own.

After we do our weeks, if there is any time left, we talk about a Topic. Our Topics have included our "Coming Out" stories, our relationships with our fathers, gay/bi/straight stereotypes, ex-lovers, and sex. Sometimes we consider eliminating our weeks, but our weeks seem to keep happening, like it or not, so we talk about them. Which means we haven't gotten to a whole lot of Topics yet.

One week someone suggested that in addition to doing the group, we meet in pairs, or dyads, which we immediately renamed bi-ads. In this way, we get to know each other in a different context — one-on-one, socially, or however one chooses to structure it.

We are intellectuals, too, some of us. We have formed a sub-group — we read Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* and discuss it before the weekly meeting. I have found it extremely enlightening, I must say. At first I thought it would be unacceptably radical, but it's not. It's full of Truth. No kidding.

We have been wanting to name our group, but we can't decide on a name. I had three very brilliant ideas: the Bi Bi Blackbirds, the Alibis, and the Lullabis. All vetoed. Another idea we suggested: the Bi-namics. Hmmm. We don't have a name yet. But we are working on it.

Mary-Charlotte D  
(ed. note - this is my support group, too!!!)

Dear BBWN,

I've been receiving your newsletter for some time now without expressing gratitude for the great job you folks do. Thank you. At present, I'm not in touch with any other women who identify with a bisexual lifestyle; your newsletter has helped to validate my choice by making me aware of other women who often share my feelings.

I'm very sorry that I don't have the money to make a contribution now. I've just graduated from college and will be working soon. You can be sure that with my first paycheck I'll join BBWN. Again, I really appreciate receiving your newsletter.

Your sister in peace, Donna.

Dear BBWN,

Hi! I'm [redacted] I am a bisexual married woman, 42 years old. My husband is straight but aware and supportive.

Although Las Vegas is called "Sin City" I find few or no businesses or recreation facilities catering to bisexual women. Those that cater to gays or lesbians often treat us like "ugly stepchildren."

I would like to form an organization for bisexual women, possibly forming a corporation at some future date to purchase (or even build) our own building, and land for a multi-purpose headquarters with counseling facilities as well as social, including a liquor license.

I want to go about this in a caring and sharing but also businesslike manner and I would appreciate any advice or information you can offer. This will be a legitimate venture and I have an attorney to advise me on all the legal aspects.

Also, if you know any bisexual women who might be relocating to Las Vegas, feel free to give them my name, address and phone number. I'd be happy to help them get settled and to find a job — even put them up for a week or two 'til they get settled. I know how rough it can be when you don't know anyone.

By the way, I got your address from the Gay Community News.

I hope to hear from you soon.

[redacted]

Dear BBWN,

This has got to be written in minutes, before I rush off to classes, but I want to thank you so very much, especially those of BBWN who are doing more than their share to keep things going! Soon I'll be done with school (in August - yeah!) and actually will be graduating a year and one day from the first encounter I had with BBWN, at the Cambridge Women's Center. To Robyn, Betty, Sylvia and all others who are keepings things going now and to those who have done so before, I want to say THANKS! BBWN has been a lifeline for me this year. I plan to join the ranks of regular volunteers the minute this semester is over.

Love, Joanna A



## Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Coordinating Committee Meeting of 3/24/85

Meeting took place at Lesley's home with very low attendance (5 people, incl. 1 new) so not much was officially done. However, we did discuss the following:

1. Lesbian and Gay Pride Week -  
Nadine was not present to give report but we decided that information about Pride Week activities should go in next (this) issue of newsletter. Final planning will be done at next CC meeting (Sun. 28 April at Robyn's)
2. Calendar -  
Dates and deadlines through end of July were set. See BBWN Calendar for details.
3. Retreat -  
Second annual BBWN and BBMN Summer Retreat was discussed and set for August 2-4 at Another Place in New Hampshire. Lesley and Paula agreed to form planning committee with representatives of BBMN.
4. Study Group -  
Kate reported that study group attendance had been weak and that it was currently in hiatus but would be restarting soon!
5. Next General Meeting -  
Next General Meeting will be held Tuesday 28 May at Somewhere Else and will be entitled: "Lesbian-Gay Pride is Our Pride, Too." We will discuss Pride Week in specific and bisexual women's involvement in the Lesbian community in general.
6. Treasurer's Report -  
Sylvia was not present to give report but Terry said that the Regional Committee would repay BBWN \$72.05 for bulk mailing.
7. Other Events -  
Paula mentioned that Beth I is trying to organize 3-part round-table discussion of Bisexual women and Lesbians on their difficulties relating to each other. Paula herself is interested in organizing a dance to be held in late June. There was some discussion over whether it should also be open to BBMN and it was tentatively decided that if they would help plan and pay for the event then they would also be invited.

## Bi The Way

Did you know that we have our own Dear Abby-style advice column? In previous issues of the newsletter the "Bi the Way" column provided readers with a space to send in personal questions, dilemmas, and general puzzles of life. Our therapist consultant, Bet McArthur, ACSW LICSW, a psychotherapist with an office in Cambridge, will answer your letters with compassion and constructive advice. Please be brave and send in your questions for all of us to learn from.

continued from page 1

On the flip side, the fact remains that many of us want to claim a label of some sort. We are not straight and we are not gay, and we want a word that identifies us and allows us to find each other. Words are powerful — without the word "bisexuality" we could not have had a conference on the subject. Alternative labels were proposed, none of them satisfactory: Humanist, Androgynous, Gender-blind, and Ambisexual were the ones I heard. Humanist and Androgynous, however, already mean something else; Gender-blind is inappropriate, since no one is; and Ambisexual sounds too much like ambivalent and ambidextrous, both of which carry negative connotations for bisexuals. ("Oh, yeah, bisexuals — they're not too sure about themselves, and they do it with both hands.")

What I realized in the discussion of language was that both positions are valid — we need labels and we don't want them. We need to know ourselves and each other, to speak and write about our lives, our sexuality; but we do not want to be boxed or categorized, especially since our lives have been about freeing ourselves from the categories Lesbian, Straight, etc. By synthesizing the two positions, we can live the most powerful kind of existence. We can live with labels when we need them, and at the same time acknowledge that they are inadequate, that the only words will describe our lives, are the words of our own personal herstories and histories.

### Relationships.

There was much discussion about the problem of long-term relationships. I had never given much thought to this one, since my discovery of women occurred quite recently (less than two years ago) and has brought me glorious feelings of freedom from many deeply entrenched ideas, like the one that Marriage is a Life Requirement, without which I will be a Failure. I'm young, though. Older people (by which I don't mean old, but maybe over 30) spoke of their desire for a long-term relationship with one person and the difficulties that come with it, since there is always the potential desire to become intimate with someone else. Of course, many non-bisexual people involved in long-term relationships become intimate with someone else over the years; this is characteristics of human beings who live in groups of three or more. But the problem seems more dramatic with bisexuals because the experiences we have with men and with women are very different, and we like them both.

# NEW WORDS

A WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE

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10-9 THURS.  
12-6 SUN.  
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I must admit, I did not meet anyone who had resolved this very complex emotional issue in a comfortable way. Threesomes have been tried and sound wonderful in theory; unfortunately, they don't tend to work over the long term. One reason is jealousy when two of the three become more closely attached and one is left out. Another reason is that there is a low chance that three people's interests, desires, and lifestyles will compliment each other over many years; it's hard enough with two.

"Affairs" are always troublesome, but so is the failure to recognize the feelings that lead to them. Still, the problem of jealousy is a big one, and it is a strong relationship indeed that can happily survive a bisexual partner engaging in relationships beyond the primary one.

Perhaps what we can draw from each other and from events like the conference is the strength to confront our individual problems bravely and directly, without guilt and without the feeling that when we do engage in relationships outside our main one, we must punish ourselves for betraying not only a person but an entire gender. I sensed at the conference an increasing spirit of self-acceptance and awareness of the dynamic nature of life and relationships, an acceptance that people, even "married" or committed people, are separate individuals who grow and change all the time.

Spirit.

The atmosphere of the conference was amazingly high, enthusiastic, and supportive all day. I have been to many women's meetings, in the network, in college, and so on, where there was a similarly great spirit, but this was the first time I felt it in a co-ed (or whatever the current terminology is) group. I encountered no macho-ness, no game-playing, no condescension from the men there; I said whatever I wanted to, without being aware of asserting myself, without concern about people's reactions. (The fact that this felt different from what I am used to has made me re-examine my everyday life and interactions, particularly where I work. I have found that, despite its being young and liberal, my company is riddled with subtle and blatant sexism. Big surprise.) Such a supportive atmosphere is worth holding onto and cultivating. I have to remind myself sometimes that it actually happened, that such a shared experience between women is actually possible. I look forward to the formation of the Boston Bisexual All-Gender Network, and to next year's conference.

Mary-Charlotte D



**BETH WALSH**

MASSAGE  POLARITY

576-1493

(617) 623-7258

#### Keynote Address for Bisexual Conference

Hi. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Second New England Regional Conference on Bisexuality.

Welcome. I welcome everyone: bisexuals, lesbians, gay men, heterosexuals, and asexuals. This day is for all of us.

One of the greatest challenges of organizing around the issue of bisexuality is that we are a VERY diverse group. If you look around today you will see that we represent many different backgrounds and lifestyles. We are men and women of all ages. Some of us are married, some have chosen never to marry. We are monogamous and nonmonogamous, and range from promiscuous to celibate. Some of us are involved with women, some with men, some with both, and some with neither. There are people here from New York, Vermont, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island - AND EVEN FROM MASSACHUSETTS. I welcome all of you.

So what do we mean when we call ourselves bisexual? When we use the word bisexual are we defining our sexuality, our lifestyle, or theoretical outlook on the world, or a combination of these? Can one be bisexual and lesbian or gay at the same time? Is there such a thing as a theoretical bisexual whose primarily relationships have been with only one gender but who believes in the CONCEPT of bisexuality? Does bisexuality preclude celibacy and monogamy or are we all inherently bisexual?

These are complex questions which deserve answers. This conference can provide us with an opportunity to establish a meaningful dialogue about these and other key issues facing our community. We can use the diversity that exists among us to discuss these questions, and to work toward a clearer understanding of ourselves and of one another. It is unrealistic to expect that we will agree on everything. We will not. What we CAN do today is provide a safe environment where each of us is free to share our ideas and learn from our differences. We can also use this opportunity to meet new people, get to know one another and enjoy ourselves.

Things are changing for bisexuals in New England. Things are getting better for us. Networks and support groups have sprung up in many cities. We are organizing ourselves in New York, Connecticut, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and in Washington D.C. Bisexual contingents are marching in Gay Pride parades. Many gay and lesbian organizations are becoming gay, lesbian and bisexual organizations. We have had articles written about us in papers ranging from Gay Community News to the Boston Globe. And we now have our own newsletters.

Years of struggle by lesbians, gay men, and feminists have brought about a growing acceptance of diversity. Visibility of gays, lesbians and bisexuals — on television, in the movies, and in plays — has increased dramatically. There is a growing understanding of our need to support one another and to work in coalition with one another. This conference can play a key role in developing and strengthening these coalitions.

continued on page 7



### Workshop: Taking Our Place in Heterosexual Community

The major theme that emerged was around educating heterosexuals on issues of gayness and bisexuality, defusing the fear and ignorance surrounding the topic of same-sex relationships.

What do you do when you hear co-workers, clients, friends, or acquaintances speaking of gays or bisexuals with disgust or derision? Suggested responses ranged from light mockery to direct refusal to accept the bigotry. Another suggestion was to mention a TV movie or sitcom that recently aired gay-related issues and discuss it.

How do you respond to people who continually ask when you're going to get married? One woman's standard response is "Until marriage is extended to gay people as well, I will not marry." Many people have responded respectfully to her statement, and some were unaware that gays couldn't marry! Let this be a lesson to us: Never underestimate the ignorance of straight people around gay/bi issues, and ignorance is the basis of fear & hatred. This same woman's boyfriend wears a button reading "I'm not gay but my lover is." You can imagine what kind of discussion that provokes!!

How can straight, bisexual, and lesbian women support each other? We as bisexuals and lesbians can welcome straight women into our community as they often feel fearful and/or left out. Give your 'straight' woman friends hugs and affection, too. Encourage group and women pair dancing. Let's get female physical closeness (not necessarily sexual) out of the closet! If European women do it, it must be cool!!

Other question came up that might be good for discussion in support groups. How have survivors of sexual abuse dealt with men in intimate relationships? How do bisexual women deal with sexism in male/female relationships? And last, but not least, can you be powerful in a skirt?

— Liz N

### UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

There will be a potluck dinner for all members of BBWN on Saturday, May 18, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Terry M. in Somerville. After dinner, all will repair to Somewhere Else for dancing etcetera -- if you can't make it in time for dinner, meet us there at 10:00 p.m.

#### Dance

A joint benefit for BBWN and BBMN. June 29 9-12 PM at the Joy of Movement studio at Kenmore Sq. Let's have a party and support our busy networks!

The 2nd Annual BBWN and BBMN Summer Weekend Retreat will be held August 2-4 at Another Place in New Hampshire. \$30-\$60 sliding fee scale (\$45 minimum after June 30). Make checks out to: North East Regional Committee and mail to: "BBWN-Retreat, Box 1534, Jamaica Plain 02130. Maps and detailed info will be mailed in July.

### Workshop: Women Identified Women

Never having attended a bisexuality conference, I felt in awe of the diversity of orientations represented at the conference. Our group was comprised of bisexual women who are lesbian and/or woman-identified. We found, after an initial sharing of problems and successes, that there were a few primary issues about which we were concerned. Acceptance as bisexuals by the lesbian community was a major issue. The group seemed positive that the development of confidence in our decision to be bisexual made us less subject to victimization by others - straight, gay and undecided. Many of the women in the group touted the intelligence and courage of women, and we praised ourselves for having the strength to be open with people who care about us. Even those women who entered the group "late," "cute," or otherwise, were warmly lulled into a sense of unified acceptance by the group's facilitator, [REDACTED]. The 1 1/2 hour workshop was my first public interchange of feelings on the bisexual lifestyle, and I found it a truly telling experience.

— Susan K

### Workshop: The Care and Feeding of the Bisexual Network

This workshop was attended by 20 people representing a variety of geographic areas, including Boston, Northampton, and Provincetown MA, Brooklyn NY, rural New Hampshire, and Philadelphia PA. We discussed the birth and development of a network, using BBWN as a model. A handout, including copies of BBWN Bi-Laws, Newsletter, fact sheet, and membership form was distributed. It was emphasized that certain decisions, such as whether to form a single or mixed gender group, and what type of organization is needed, must be made by local organizers according to the specific needs of their communities. There is no single "best" model.

Other key pieces of advice included:

- Start small and expand according to demand.
- Advertising is very important.
- Make sure your group of organizers doesn't become cliquey.
- Try to divide responsibility into bite sized tasks.
- Keep in touch with other networks.

— Robyn O

### Statistics: BOSTON CONFERENCE ON BISEXUALITY March 2, 1985

	Pre-registered	At the door	TOTAL
#	138	92	230
actual	117	*92+	*209+
M	38	32	70
F	79	60	139
Boston	70	60	130
MA	19	11	30
Other	28	21	49

\* Workshop leaders, craftspersons, entertainers, other workers are not counted in this figure.



continued from page 5

We must remember that GAY LIBERATION IS OUR LIBERATION. As bisexuals, we experience gay oppression every day of our lives. Bisexuals enjoy "heterosexual privilege" only when we are showing the world only our heterosexual sides. As long as we are not safe to show the world our other side, our gay side, we are not free to be all of whom we really are. We too can be fired from our jobs for being gay. (You can't say, oh just reduce my hours to half-time, I'm bisexual.) We too can be 'queerbashed' as we are coming out of lesbian/gay events. (You can't say, oh just beat me up halfway, I'm only half gay.) We too run the risk of having our children taken from us in a custody battle. (You can't say oh I should be able to keep half of my children, I'm Bisexual.) It is not enough to be accepted for half of ourselves by our heterosexual friends and lovers or to share half of our lives with our families. We really DO share this oppression with our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. We need to work with the gay and lesbian community toward the day when we can all support one another and work together toward the elimination of homophobia and the creation of a world where all of us can be safe all of the time to be whomever we are: lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, asexual.

As bisexuals, we also have a key role to play in the heterosexual community. We are the primary contacts many heterosexual people have with lesbian and gay values. As a result, we are in a position to challenge the limiting fears and stereotypes of our heterosexual friends and lovers by openly sharing with them our visions of close relationships with all people. If we put our mind to it, we can develop large numbers of heterosexual allies for our lesbian/gay/bisexual movement, for it is in the interest of all of us to end this oppression for good. Bisexuals can act as catalysts toward this change. I ask each of us to consider taking on this challenge...

Our hope is that we will leave this day with greater pride in ourselves, with a better understanding of one another, and with strategies for the future. I think we can accomplish this. This is a one-day conference but this is not a one-day movement. This is not a one-night stand. This conference is one step toward achieving these goals. We are important. We are in a unique position to build bridges and to BE bridges. Let's get to work.

— Robyn O

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COUNSELING

individual, couple and group counseling for Women

continued from page 1

In their dissenting opinion, Rowland v. Mad River District, No. 84-532, Justices Brennan and Marshall said that "homosexuals constitute a significant and insular minority of this country's population." They said that "because of the immediate and severe opprobrium often manifested against homosexuals once so identified publicly, members of this group are particularly powerless to pursue their rights openly in the public arena."

The following letter was sent to Barry Schulman, Programming Director at WBZ-TV.

Dear Mr. Schulman:

I am writing on behalf of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network's Coordinating Committee to register our disagreement with your decision to "dis-invite" the editors of a book about lesbian nuns who had been invited to appear on the "People Are Talking" show. A show about Lesbian nuns is no more "anti-Catholic" than would a book about Asian lesbians be "anti-Asian." Some nuns are lesbians, and there are many gay Catholics. This book is about real individuals and deserves recognition.

The value of the "People Are Talking" show lies in its attempt to represent many viewpoints, some of which are controversial. To acquiesce to pressure from a group of anti-gay Catholics or any other special interest group to deny access to your show to another group feeds into the type of repressive censorship promoted by groups such as the Moral Majority, Inc.

We strongly urge you to reinstate the editors of Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence to your station. They deserve to be heard and we would like very much to hear what they have to say.

Sincerely, Robyn O

Ask Beth: Boston Globe, Thurs. 11 April 1985

Dear Beth,

I am a senior in high school and have been dating a junior named Mary. When I am in her house, I spend a lot of time with her brother, who is in my biology class. I find I have strange feelings toward him. I'm afraid of what people might think if I told them I'd rather be with him than with Mary. What should I do?

Karl

Dear Karl,

You do not need to tell them but you do need to understand your own sexuality. If you are in doubt, talk to a sex counselor who can help you clarify your sexual identity. You will learn that sexual preference is not polarized into all 'hetero-' or all 'homo-' sexuality. Most people fall somewhere in between. You cannot control your sexual direction, but you can control your sexual behavior. For that, you need to understand yourself.



- May 3/4 - Libana in concert 8 PM, Paine Hall, Harvard Univ. Call 864-6912 for info.
- May 4/5 - Building Bridges. Concert with (our own) Betsy Rose & Fred Small on Saturday the 4th followed by a workshop on relationships between women and men led by Ann Neitlich and Charlie Kreiner on Sunday the 5th. For information call Robyn at 491-8334.
- May 10 - Duck's Breath Mystery Theater. Very funny. For info. call 547-5704.
- May 11 - Libana in concert, 8 PM, Faneuil Hall. Call 864-6912 for info.
- May 18 - Pot Luck Dinner, 7 PM at Terry's in Somerville. Call 625-8397 for directions &/or suggestions as to what to bring. Dancing after dinner at Somewhere Else. If you can't make dinner, meet us there at 10 PM.
- May 22 - Study Group - Focus on the reading "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" by Audre Lorde, available in pamphlet form at New Words Bookstore. For location information call Sue at 666-2851 or Sara at 628-6007. Open to all women, 7:30 PM.
- May 28 - General Meeting. Discussion Topic: "Lesbian-Gay Pride is Our Pride Too." Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin St., Boston, 7 PM.
- June 2 - Coordination Committee Meeting at Sylvia's, 4 PM. Call 731-1399 for directions
- June 3 - Interested in helping with BBWN? Come to an informational meeting for volunteers at 7 PM. Bring a dessert or beverage if possible. This will be an opportunity both to discuss ways to help BBWN as well as to get together with other BBWN women. For info/directions call Robyn 491-8334.
- June 10 - Lesbian-Gay Pride Week. Watch GCN or Bay Windows for full calendar or call Lesbian-Gay Pride Committee at 889-4777 or 236-1641.
- June 15 - Lesbian-Gay Pride March. BBWN is organizing a contingent. If you are interested in helping call Charnan at 623-5443. Brunch Before the March, 565 Boylston St. 2nd Floor (Community Church of Boston), 10-12 AM, \$3 all you can eat. All women & friends welcome.

TELEPHONE (617) 498-9923

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**Wanted Alive:** Professional woman, 30+. Crime: Homelessness. Distinguishing characteristics: responsible, neat, quiet, non-smoking, own car, loves cats. Reward: furnished room in 'doll house' in W. Roxbury for \$300 (negotiable if part-time). All information leading to the capture of this character should be referred to Ellen, 327-1926.

Seeking traveling companion for Maine and Canada vacation this summer or fall. Call I.J. at 354-4867.

10-week therapy group forming for women coming out as bisexual. Group will meet Wednesday evenings. Call Libra at 623-3074 for info.

Found: At the March 2 Conference, an olive green, v-neck sweater; please call Terry M at 625-8397 if it is yours.

Is anyone interested in organizing a BBWN softball team? If so, please call Terry M at 625-8397.

June 22/23 - Sisterfire. An open air festival of women's culture in Wash. D.C. If you're interested in possibility of carpooling from Boston, come to Brunch Before the March on June 15.

June 28 - Australian activist and Lesbian singer/songwriter Judy Small with Priscilla Herdman at Paine Hall, Harvard Univ., 8 PM. For info call Robyn 491-8334.

June 29 - Dance. Benefit for BBWN at Kenmore Sq. Joy of Movement, 9-12 PM. Open to All. For info call Paula 254-4218.

June 30 - Coordinating Committee Meeting at Robyn's. Call 491-8334 for direction and agenda info. 4 PM.

July 1 - Newsletter Stuff

July 24 - General Meeting - Somewhere Else

July 28 - Coordinating Committee Meeting

August 2-4 - 2nd Annual Summer Retreat. See enclosed information.

## BODYWORKS



MARGARITA ASCENCIO  
576-1493

53 RIVER STREET, CAMBRIDGE, NR CENTRAL SQUARE (T)

Spring has sprung, finally, and BBWN is gearing up for a busy summer of meetings, marches, parties, concerts, and more. If you don't believe me, just look at the calendar above. If you could help us cover the costs of this increased activity, we would be very grateful. Also, if you're not yet a member of BBWN, now is the best time to join. So, please send what you can. Thanks and have a great summer.

YES! SIGN ME UP! I WANT TO BE A:  
☐ Contributing member (\$25)  
☐ Regular member (\$10)  
☐ Truly needy member (\$5)

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO BBWN  
THANK YOU!!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

I can help with \_\_\_\_\_





# BBWN

P.O. Box 1534

Jamaica Plain, MA 02130



## DSS Decision Far-Reaching Implications

For a few weeks now, I have been having swarming thoughts about the recent DSS decision to allow only "normal, traditional families" to care for foster children. I think about it when I am lying in bed at night, while riding the T, while grocery shopping, cooking meals etc. I feel like I am spending countless hours trying to make sense of a senseless act. I start looking at all the implications this recent decision has on the gay/lesbian community and on every resident in Massachusetts.

I recently heard a speech by Mel King at a five year anniversary of the drop-in center at Project Place. The focus of his speech keeps on running through my mind. He was talking about the cut-out ramps placed in curbs for the differently abled. A simple solution to a long term problem for women and men in wheelchairs. They only became a reality, however, when the handicapped began a movement for their rights. Money was allocated for the cut-outs to help them. Mr. King went on to say that you never do anything to just make life easier for someone else where you don't benefit also. Women pushing baby carriages have benefitted. Bikers have benefitted. People pushing heavy loads on dollies have benefitted. The elderly pushing grocery carts have benefitted. Think about how you have benefitted next time you have something to push off a curb.

I have been struck with how this philosophy of things coming back ten-fold can be applied to the recent DSS policy. Maybe you are sitting back and saying, "Well, I never wanted to be a foster parent anyway, so it doesn't affect me." If you are a single woman and straight - it affects you. If you are a married bisexual woman - it affects you. If you are a straight social worker it affects you. If you are a woman working outside the home - it affects you.

Although the decision is targeted towards the gay community right now, any law attempting to define what our families can be legally, is dangerous. Single women, working women, and married bisexual women - welcome to the unacceptable family category. Right now it talks about Foster parenting, but shortly it will also have major implications in adopting, in retaining legal custody of your own children after divorce, and maybe even removing children

(continued on page 5)

## Gay Rights Bill Needs Bi Support

The recent controversy surrounding gays as foster care providers, and the subsequent homophobic reactions of Governor Dukakis and the Massachusetts state legislature, have made many of us painfully aware of the precarious nature of our rights as citizens of this commonwealth. The gay foster parent issue and the attempts of many political figures to deprive homosexuals of their legal and social validity as parents demonstrate the pressing need for state-wide legislation to protect Gays and Lesbians in a variety of civil rights areas.

There are currently bills proposing such legislation pending votes in both the Massachusetts House of Representatives and the Senate. These bills, if passed, will amend existing state civil rights laws to make discrimination on the basis of sexual preference illegal in employment, housing, public accommodations, credit union membership, insurance and commercial leasing.

It is imperative that all persons favoring this legislation contact their representatives and senators as soon as possible. Votes on the bills will probably take place within the next few weeks.

Letters written to members of the House should refer to bill #3123; those written to members of the Senate should refer to bill #748. Letters are to be addressed to your representative, c/o State House, Boston, MA 02133. If you do not know who your legislators are, you can call the League of Women Voters Information Line at 357-5880 to identify them.

Let's express our support for ending

(continued on page 4)

## Volunteer Night!

July 1

Ladies: Want to have some real fun? Bring yourself to Volunteer Night. Here's your chance to meet other women in the Network, to eat munchies, and to help out with the zillions of BBWN tasks, large and small, that need to be done. Everything from typing and filing to writing letters, to thinking up new ideas for Network activities. All contributions of time and effort will be useful.

Remember, it's your Network. And remember, we're here to have a good time. And finally, don't forget to bring some munchies and drinks.

The newsletter of The Boston Bisexual Women's Network



## Next General Meeting

The next General Meeting of BBWN will be held upstairs at Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin St., Boston, on Wednesday, July 24 at 7 PM. The topic for discussion will be "Alternative Parenting." Somewhere Else is a women's space, and easily reachable by the T (Green Line to Government Center, Blue Line to Aquarium, Orange Line to State, Red Line to South Station). Hope to see you there!! All Women Are Welcome.

## Next C.C. Meeting

The next meeting of the BBWN Coordinating Committee will be held on Sunday, June 30, at 6 PM at Robyn's in Cambridge. Call 491-8334 for directions.

## Lawyers Needed!

The BBWN is seeking someone with legal expertise in helping us file papers for tax exempt, non-profit and/or incorporation status. If anyone is interested in working with the CC Committee and helping us figure out what status best suits our needs for tax purposes, endowments etc., PLEASE contact Betty at 731-1399.

### IN APPRECIATION

Some people wade into the water slowly, others dive in without hesitation. [redacted] is in the latter group. [redacted] attended her first General Meeting on January 16, and attended her first Coordinating Committee Meeting the following Sunday. [redacted] walked out of that CC meeting with several new friends and a project in tow: she had just volunteered to co-edit the March-April issue of the BBWN Newsletter! [redacted] went on to edit the April-May Newsletter, and is also working on a BBWN dance party in June and on the New England Regional Committee on Bisexuality Summer Retreat August 2-4. She is the layout artist for the last three newsletters (current one included), and is a regular member of the Coordinating Committee. Gasp. Thank you [redacted]. You are much appreciated.

### NEWSLETTER STAFF FOR THIS ISSUE

Ruth Lande, editor and layout; Mary-Charlotte Domandi, assistant editor and layout; [redacted], consulting editor; Betty Aubut, Sue Nunn, contributors; Elissa Malcohn, typing; Betty Aubut, advertising

## Outrageous Women

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## BBWN Retreat

"One of the best weekends of my life"

- A BBWN member on the 1984 Summer Retreat. Yes, it's the Second Annual Bisexual Weekend Retreat taking place Aug. 2-4 at Another Place in Greenville, NH. A weekend of discussion, workshops, massage, swimming, music, meditation, yoga, hiking and more for Bisexuals and their spouses, lovers, families and friends. Cost of registration after June 30 is \$45-60. Make checks payable to Northeast Regional Committee and send to P.O. Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. Hope to see you there!

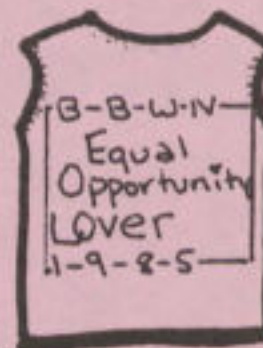
## Bi Pride

AND WE WERE PROUD!

The day was sunny and beautiful on Saturday the 15th, as over 20,000 people marched in the 15th Annual Lesbian-Gay Pride March. For the third year, we marched under a banner bearing our name and the slogan "Gay Pride is Our Pride Too." Our contingent numbered about 35, many wearing this year's BBWN T-shirt (Equal Opportunity Lover). Our enthusiasm showed and we were well received.

### FREEDOM TRAIL BAND IN BOSTON

Did you march in gay pride on June 15th to the sounds of John Phillips Sousa? The Freedom Trail Band in Boston, the only gay/lesbian band in this area will be continuing to perform in the Boston area as a concert band. Please take your instruments out of the closet, come play with us, and meet some wonderful men and women from the lesbian, gay and bisexual community.



NEW BBWN T-SHIRTS  
DESIGNED BY SYLVIA

And they are H-O-T!!!!

Each year to commemorate Pride Day the BBWN designs a new T-shirt. This year's muscle shirt is hot pink on black or white. On cooler days they can be worn as vests over turtlenecks etc. I wore my over a hot pink shirt and received many comments from people. It was striking. They can be purchased at any BBWN event. Write for more info.

THANKS SYLVIA!

### EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Starting this issue, contributors to the newsletter have the option of having their full names printed. When submitting material, please make your preference clear.



# Reader's Forum

Dear BBWN,

I was about to send this off with \$10 reg. membership when 1) my office closed (no job), 2) my baby daughter caught spinal meningitis (10 day hospital stay). At this point, I'm beyond "truly needy" (for the time being, at any rate). I really enjoy receiving the newsletter and would like to begin writing for it, in exchange for a subscription. Since I am not working outside the home at this time, I would like to address a few points that never seem to be covered in the newsletter.

1) children (how they see bisexuality in parents, their potential as bisexuals, sexual development as learned behavior vs. inherent, etc.; 2) our heterosexual side - I still get more discrimination from my strictly lesbian friends than from my strictly heterosexual friends; 3) how does bisexuality change the way we view all people, i.e., are all people potential lovers, or, are all people potential friends, or both, or what? 4) after answering (3), what can bisexuals say about sexuality? Does it take on a new meaning? Does it just merge into "human behavior" and become indistinguishable, as a handshake? a kiss? a hug? nursing a baby? an orgasm? sitting on your heels? six people holding hands? Not to go on and on already. Sorry. At any rate, I would love to continue receiving the newsletter and will send money if I can stretch my unemployment. If not - how about some "food for thought?"

Love, Rebecca J. Brown

Bryan, Texas

P.S. I'm attending the Michigan Women's Music Festival in August 85. Will I see any of you there?

Dear BBWN,

In pulling together materials for yesterday's monthly meeting I realized that I haven't seen your May-June issue of your newsletter. I also came across a note from Sharon Page, one of the founding "mothers" of the group, reminding me that your newsletter had been mailed to her home address.

Since Sharon has now moved to California I'm writing to request that you send copies of your newsletter to our P.O. Box (as listed above). If you'd already mailed out the May-June issue we'd appreciate it if you could mail us another copy.

We look to BBWN as a sort of "role-model" and a source of support. Your newsletter is therefore greatly appreciated. Thanks much. Sincerely,

Pat Hulsebosch  
Co-Chair  
Action Bi-Women (ABW)  
P.O. Box 117  
Chicago, IL 60657

Dear BBWN,

As women who are proud of our role in BBWN, we welcome the Network's new policy of giving women the option to use our last names in the newsletter. Sincerely,

Betty Aubut

Kate Keegan  
Ruth Lande  
Robyn Ochs  
Lesley Phillips  
Blake Walton  
Mary-Charlotte Domandi

Dear BBWN,

Some time ago, I wrote to BBWN about information on starting a Bisexual Women's group here in Baltimore. I never received any answer! I see that a handout and other information was given out at the conference in March. I would like to receive that information. I'll be happy to pay for photocopying and postage costs.

I would also appreciate it if you could put me in touch with someone in this area who could assist me with the organization of the group. I can be reached at (301) 659-0520 day and evening.

I want you to know how much I appreciate receiving your newsletter. The lesbian community here is rather hostile towards bisexual women, and I have not met any other women who describe themselves as bisexual, so I've been somewhat lonely. Your newsletter is a great "connection" for me. Keep up the good work! Best wishes,

—Cheryl McDuffie

Dear BBWN,

I will be the coordinator of the Women's Resource Center at San Diego State University during the '85-'86 school year. If anyone happens to be in this area, please stop by! Thanks and look forward to seeing you all.

—Robin Parke

San Diego, Cal.

## BI-CITY BISEXUAL ANTHOLOGY MEETING

On June 8, the New York and Boston contingents of the bisexual anthology collective met at Elissa's. (The anthology collective was formed at the New England Regional Conference).

We geared this meeting toward composing a statement of purpose - for the collective and for the anthology - and toward ways in which the New York and Boston groups will coordinate with each other.

After raising issues we would like to have in the statement of purpose, we set July as a deadline for our final draft. An anthology meeting may be held during the Bi Retreat. The next bi-city meeting (in NY) is set for September, and a fundraiser for the anthology is also being planned.

Please send proposals, ideas, etc. to the P.O. box if you're interested! (Thanks) When finalized, our statement of purpose will be submitted to the Newsletter.

—Elissa Malcohn

## Dear Bet

Did you know that we have our own Dear Abby-style advice column? In previous issues of the newsletter the "Bi the Way" column provided readers with a space to send in personal questions, dilemmas, and general puzzles of life. Our therapist consultant, Bet McArthur ACSW LICSW, a psychotherapist with an office in Cambridge, will answer your letters with compassion and constructive advice. Please be brave and send in your questions for all of us to learn from.

## Writers...

\* Lingering thoughts about the conference?  
\* A strange coming-out experience?  
\* Traumas & triumphs of a Bisexual Lifestyle?  
\* Visions of a Bisexual utopia?  
Write it up for the next Newsletter! P.O. Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130



## Mixed Media

Sex and Health: *Glamour*, May 1985, p.320

A woman who has been a friend of mine for several years recently told me she was bisexual. I was so surprised that I didn't know what to say. Just what does bisexuality mean and how should I deal with this?

It's difficult to speak in absolute terms about bisexuality, because there's so little solid research on the subject. However, many sexologists describe bisexuality as a sexual orientation in which a person derives sexual and emotional fulfillment with persons of both sexes.

The limited data suggest that those women and men who have a bisexual orientation tend to have relationships with one sex more than the other, although they find meaning in both. They usually do not have sexual relationships with both sexes during the same period of time. But again bisexual persons do not neatly fit into a category or mold. The shades and degrees of their behavior and feelings produce a complex picture not yet completely understood.

As to why your friend has decided to tell you about this, there are several possibilities. She may trust and like you, and her disclosure may simply be a desire to share an important fact of her life with you. She may be feeling pressure, confusion, or alienation about her sexual orientation and need to talk to someone about it. Because you are a long-term friend, she may feel that you can help her sort things out.

Of course, it's also possible that her revelation may be intended as a sexual invitation. If this turns out to be the case, the best way to deal with it is to be clear about your sexual interests and leave it at that. Keep in mind that you have had a valuable friendship with her before you knew her sexual orientation. You should still be able to remain friends without awkwardness if you don't let this news affect you too much.

## Reverse Discrimination?

The following letter was sent to the 1270 Club:

To whom it may concern:

Last Thursday night a woman friend and I were denied entrance to the 1270 club on Boylston Street. I am an "out" bisexual woman, active in the bisexual community and other women's activities. I frequent the gay women's bars in Boston, and I have gone dancing at the 1270 many times. I was therefore very surprised to be suddenly turned away at the door. We were treated rudely, were asked for a form of identification that others being admitted were not asked for, and were not given a clear answer as to what was going on; after my truly bewildered questions about why we could not go in — our drivers' licenses were valid and showed us to be well over drinking age — the bouncer told the policeman standing nearby to remove us. One of the security people inside the club was extremely nasty to us. I felt wounded and hassled for no good reason.

Standing outside the club I realized what had happened — the bouncers had thought we were straight women because we were wearing

clothes appropriate to a young friend of ours' high school graduation, from which we had just come. We talked to the policeman and to people going in and out of the club, and they verified that the club does not want straights there and is very firm about keeping them out. Apparently they have had trouble with straights coming in and hassling people.

I can sympathize with this attitude. We want to feel safe when we go dancing, to feel that we are among allies even if the rest of the world is hostile to us. I understand their not letting us in, yet I feel torn because the verbal rudeness and hostility were misplaced and shocking. It felt like a reversed roles re-enactment of precisely the kind of discrimination that Gays (and every other minority group, for that matter) have experienced in the straight world: "We don't want your kind in here!"

Still, I am not condemning the 1270 for this kind of discrimination. They have probably had to fight battles that straight clubs have not. The concern I have is this: It is getting harder to tell the good guys from the bad guys than it was ten, even five years ago. A lot of gay and bisexual women and men do not dress in clothes that immediately identify them with their sexual preference, and a growing number of straights are cool people who enjoy dancing with their female and male friends, regardless of sexual preference. Many of us bisexuals identify with Lesbians and Gays politically and socially; we contribute a great deal of energy to the community and want to be accepted by it. It is a slap in the face when we get rejected.

I don't know how a club like 1270 could integrate this information into their front door policy — the idea of a bisexual or gay identification card seems ludicrous. Though I'd carry one if it existed. But I do know that incidents like the one I experienced can, unfortunately, serve to alienate the people who are on their side. After the ordeal my first impulse was to say, To hell with them, let's go to a straight club — which would have been the first time for me in years. Instead, I went home and brooded about it.

I would like to hear reactions from others in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual communities.

Sincerely yours,

Mary-Charlotte Domandi  
Jamaica Plain

## Gay Rights Bill

(continued from page 1)

discrimination based on sexual preference. Legal protection must exist for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people if we are to live freely and claim our identities without fear. Our voices must be heard on this issue.

— Sue Nunn

TELEPHONE (617) 498-9923

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COUNSELING, PSYCHOTHERAPY  
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CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139



## Calendar

June 28 (Fri) Australian activist and Lesbian singer/songwriter Judy Small with Priscilla Herdman at Paine Hall, Harvard Univ., 8 PM. Tickets \$7.50 in advance, \$8.50 at the door. For info call Robyn at 491-8334

June 29 (Sat). NOTE: Dance scheduled in previous newsletter has been cancelled!!

June 30 (Sun) BEACH DAY!! Meet at 10AM at Bay State Cruises, Long Wharf, by the red ticket office for day trip to Peddock's island. \$4 round trip for ferry.

June 30 (Sun) Coordinating Committee Meeting at Robyn's, 6 PM. Call 491-8334 for directions and agenda.

July 1 (Mon) VOLUNTEER NIGHT. BBWN needs your help organizing files, writing letters, typing, etc. Volunteer night may become a regular BBWN event. Don't miss this chance to meet people and to contribute your skills and ideas to BBWN. Bring munchies and/or drinks. For more info, call Robyn at 491-8334.

July 17 (Wed) Study Group. 7:30 PM. Focus on currently controversial lesbian sex magazines and feminist positions. For info and location call Sue at 666-2851 or Sara at 628-6007. Open to all women.

July 20 (Sat) Alix Dobkin, 8 PM. Midsummer Night's Eve for women with Alix at Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. Tickets \$7.50 in advance, \$8 at the door. ASL interpreted. For information call 547-1378.

July 24 (Wed) General Meeting. 7 PM at Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin Street, Boston. Discussion topic: "Alternative Parenting."

July 28 (Sun) Coordinating Committee Meeting. Call Robyn at 491-8334 for directions and agenda.

August 2-4 (Fri-Sun). 2nd Annual Summer Retreat. See back page of newsletter. For more info call Paula at 254-4218.

## DSS Decision

(continued from page 1)

from their own parents if the mother works. Scary, huh? How many children can you think of just in your own social circles that would become homeless?

Social workers will suffer tremendously. Their caseload would quadruple (and many already are responsible for as many as 100 children). In fact, social workers may end up needing to find homes for their own children, since many of them are married mothers working outside the home. A friend of mine was telling me today that she was talking to the nurses who works with about the new policy. They thought it was a good one. They don't think gays and lesbians should be allowed to be parents. When this policy extends to say that gays and lesbians should not be allowed to be social workers, day care workers, teachers, nurses, doctors, etc., I wonder if they will still think this type of discrimination is good. I bet many nurses they respect would have to leave their jobs. Like many people in the

world, they probably assume that they don't know any gay people. I wonder if any of them are single women that hope to adopt or become foster parents someday.

My point is that many people should be frightened. Many people should be wondering how this new policy will affect them for, just as with curbing cut-outs, what is done to help or injure one group - usually helps or hurts many.

Today I was present at the march on Governor Dukakis' home (as were many women from the network!) We were 500 strong and each and every one of us signed individual 51A child abuse and neglect complaint forms against him. He is taking children from loving homes and ordering them to be placed immediately elsewhere. They are being placed in temporary homes (2 to 30 days) that are not prepared to take on the responsibility of another child. The children are being torn away from homes they have come to feel comfortable in (for maybe the first time in their lives) without warning, without preparation, and without concern for their emotional adjustment and loss.

Who gains by this action? The foster parents lose, the social workers are placed under incredible pressure to find emergency placements, but mostly - the children suffer. The children we are talking about have usually already gone through more physical and emotional pain than many of us will see in our lifetimes. These are children that need consistency and love. Each move only creates more emotional turmoil, only adds to their separation and adjustment difficulties and only adds to their inability to develop trusting relationships. How does this policy help the children? It doesn't. It helps Governor Dukakis. This outrageous act of outright bigotry and discrimination gains points for him with other straight, conservative people. I suggest that he look at this closely. I suggest that if only straight, conservative people had voted for Dukakis, he would not be in office right now. He is working hard it seems to diminish the ability to trust all across the boards. In his campaign promises, he was for gay/lesbian rights, aid to the homeless, and proclaimed to help put an end to bigotry. I trusted him to work to make my life and the lives of many others in Mass. better. It seems Mr. Dukakis has divided loyalties.

The highlight of the speeches today for me was a letter written by a lesbian woman in the process of adopting two severely handicapped children. The recent policy decision has forced her back into the closet in order to prevent the discontinuation of her adoption proceedings. Her letter ended in a powerful way for me and for everyone at the rally. She says, "When the DSS budget and the attached amendment comes across your desk, I hope that you will think about this letter. If you fail to veto a piece of legislation making it illegal for me to adopt, you will hear from me in person. I will come to your office with the names of my children and their social workers, because I will expect you and your traditional two parent family to adopt them."

I started out this article to write about how this policy could affect bisexual women. How will the state define a traditional family when a married bisexual woman or man attempts to foster or adopt a child. By their policy, you would be a traditional home - a husband and a wife, but you are gay, too. The first test case will be interesting. We will get down to the bones of the matter. Is this decision of tradition just a smokescreen for homophobia as

(continued on page 6)



## New Literature on Bisexuality

The Journal of Homosexuality has been publishing a good deal more scholarly work on the subject of bisexuality. Last year a special double issue (Vol. 9, Nos. 2-3) came out entitled "Bisexual and Homosexual Identity: Critical Theoretical Issues." It is being published as a hardcover book as well. The latest issue of the JOH continues with "Controversy over the Bisexual and Homosexual Identities: Commentaries and Reactions" (Vol. 10, Nos. 3-4). This summer a special issue devoted solely to Bisexuality will appear, guest edited by Fred Klein, author of *The Bisexual Option*, and Timothy Wolf. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of any of these issues, contact the Hayworth Press, 53 Main Street, Binghamton, NY 13905 (607) 722-5857

The BBWN is seeking someone with legal expertise in helping us file papers for tax exempt, non-profit and/or incorporation status. If anyone is interested in working with the CC Committee and helping us figure out what status best suits our needs for tax purposes, endowments, etc., PLEASE contact Betty at 731-1399.

### TREASURER'S REPORT: BALANCE SHEET (a new feature in every newsletter...)

o <u>BALANCE</u> as of March 1, 1985	\$594.75
o <u>EXPENSES:</u>	
Annual Fee for P.O. Box Rental	-22.00
Newsletter Printing (May-June issue)	-205.88
Incidental Postage & Photocopying	-64.24
AIDS Action Committee -	
for guest speaker	-30.00
Women's Educational Center-Donation	-25.00
Pride Celebration Committee-Donation	-25.00
Deposit on T-Shirts	-100.00
Postage - Newsletter	
(Bulk mailing account)	-100.00
March-April Checking Account	
Service Charge	-5.50
o <u>DEPOSITS:</u>	
March-April interest earned	+3.25
Dues Collected	+317.05
o <u>NEW BALANCE</u> as of June 1, 1985	\$339.68

### TELL US WHEN YOU MOVE

This newsletter is sent out bulk mail, which means it is not forwarded by the post office, but is returned to us with postage due. Please keep us informed of your changes of address so you don't miss a single issue.

(continued from page 5)

we all suspect? Time will only tell, I guess. Let's not let this issue lose its importance once the immediate outrage dies down. Let's keep thinking about it in those grocery lines, on the T, and lying in bed at night. But mostly, let's talk about it - especially to women and men who seem to support the decision. I believe calm talk and education is the key to reduction of homophobia - not anger. I hope others will write to the network with their feelings about the many "homophobic" activities going on right now - like the lack of news coverage of gay pride march, etc.

——Betty Aubut

## Thank You, Thank You!!

Following is a list of the 18 women who have helped sustain BBWN by gifts this fiscal year (September 1984 - present) of \$25 or more:

Nancy I, Somerville, MA	\$60
Mary F, Northampton, MA	25
Cathy J, Cambridge, MA	30
Laurie R, Somerville, MA	30
Joy S, Jamaica Plain, MA	25
Nina C, Cambridge, MA	25
Dierdre F, Northampton, MA	25
Alice G, Braintree, MA	25
Margaret H, Roxbury, MA	25
Marge L, Jamaica Plain, MA	25
Laura L, Somerville, MA	25
Bet M, Cambridge, MA	25
Sara M, Burlington, VT	25
Robyn O, Cambridge, MA	25
Andi R, Oxnard, CA	25
Laura R, Newton, MA	25
Susan S, Winthrop, MA	25
Moo W, Pottstown, PA	25

It is thanks to the generosity of these women that BBWN has been able to maintain its policy of making the newsletter available to ALL women, regardless of their ability to contribute to BBWN.

Note: Beginning with the next issue of the Newsletter, we will be printing, in appreciation, an "Honor Roll" of women who have made recent donations of any size to BBWN. If you can afford to make a donation to help keep BBWN afloat, please do. Checks should be made payable to BBWN and mailed to Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

—— Robyn Ochs

## WE KNOW YOU KNOW

that SOJOURNER is Boston's women's newspaper. But do you subscribe? If so, then you get the paper much faster—and give us much-needed support. So why not arrange to get the news, calendar listings, and other wonderful things we offer before they're available on newsstands? Just send your name and address (and \$15) to: SOJOURNER, 143 Albany St., Cambridge, MA 02139. Your writing, photos, and ads are also welcome, of course; just call 661-3567 for details.

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## BI'S ON THE MOVE

Although I haven't been flooded with material this issue, I did receive a few wonderful letters from bi women. Jean K. wrote me a long letter from Australia with vivid descriptions of her new life there. She filled me in on the political scene there as far as gays are concerned. AIDS in front-page news there, too. Jean also provided some interesting bits of news on day-to-day life in Australia. In a short but full letter, Elissa M, a local member, wrote that she recently became Associate Editor of STAR\*LINE, the Newsletter of the Science Fiction Poetry Association. She would be glad to give more information on the organization to any science fiction buffs in the Network. You may call me at 625-8397 for her number. She also mentioned her part in the Seven Poets Anthology Collective, which just published WE'RE WORKING ON IT! This poetry anthology is available at New Words, Glad Day, Grolier, Harvard Book Store in Harvard Square, and the Harvard Book Store Cafe on Newbury Street — so far! Elissa is a very busy bi woman having appeared as a featured reader at the New Writers Collective on May 21st (Community Church of Boston). Just in time for the column, I received a note from Andi R in Southern California. She's interested in meeting me when I get to L.A. to talk about forming a network out there. Great idea! I'll let all my Boston bi friends know what happens with the L.A. connection. In local news, the pot-luck dinner at my house was a fine success. Full credit goes to all the women who put their imaginations to work and came up with a delicious variety of dishes. Dancing at Somewhere Else was exhilarating! I must say it was quite a thrill to be surrounded by such a wonderful group of women on the dance floor and realize that I knew them all from BBWN.

Well, all you good bi girls, this is it for me in my short-lived journalistic career. I'm still looking to pass the column on to an eager gossip monger (only kidding!) in the network. I'd love to hear from you if you're interested — please write me c/o the P.O. Box.

—Terry M

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## Classified

Bisexual Support group forming for women 25 and under. Call 731-1399 for details.

Woman, 31, looking to join/start support group for women over 25 who are comfortable with a bisexual identity and perhaps looking at some longer term life issues. Call Enid 296-0915

ATTENTION: Bisexual Women who attended the New England Women's Music Retreat in 1984. Some of you requested a copy of my unpublished article, "Reasons For Moving Toward A Theology of Bisexuality." I have misplaced your names and addresses. Please send me a card with mailing address if you still want a copy. To: North Cairn, P.O. Box 311, Orleans, MA 02653. Sorry about the mixup.

Second meeting of the support group for women over 35 meeting Thursday July 18 at 7 PM. We welcome new women. Call Betty for location, 731-1399.



**BETH WALSH**

MASSAGE POLARITY

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## BODYWORKS



MARGARITA ASCENCIO  
576-1493

53 RIVER STREET, CAMBRIDGE, NR CENTRAL SQUARE (T)

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# SUMMER WEEKEND RETREAT



*Friday. Aug. 2 -  
Sunday. Aug. 4*

Call Paula - 254-4218



NOTE: June 29 Dance Cancelled!!



- BBWN ANNUAL -



# BEACH DAY SUN. JUNE 30

MEET 10:00 AM AT BAY STATE CRUISES,  
ON LONG WHARF BY THE RED TICKET OFFICE,  
FOR DAY-TRIP TO PEDDOCK'S ISLAND.

BRING BEACH GEAR AND A PICNIC LUNCH!

\$4 ROUNDTrip FOR FERRY. LEAVE ISLAND 3:45.





P.O. Box 1534  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130



September  
October, 1985

Volume 3 No. 5

## A Bisexual Life in Progress: Journal Excerpts

(Names have been changed to ensure privacy)

May 29, 1985 — Alison and I left together to get the bus home. On our way I asked, "Could we take a minute?" I wanted to look around in Glad Day.

"That's a nice name!" Alison bubbled. Loudly: "Glad day, or happy day —"

"It's the gay bookstore here," I said deadpan.

"I wonder if my brother's been up here!" She continued. "He doesn't want to talk about it, doesn't like to mention it. I don't know why, he's so stuffy sometimes." She went on about how she couldn't understand why her brother is in the closet and how she thinks her brother's roommate is bisexual because he "goes out with women, too." I steered her to the shelves with books on homophobia.

She was flipping through photographs of men. "He's cute, don't you think?"

Dark hair and eyes and bushy eyebrows and a stylized Conan look that didn't do a thing for me. "He doesn't do a thing for me," I said.

"How about this one?" Next page. "I don't like him that much. I used to go for the younger men but I don't think I do any more."

Curly-haired blonde. "He doesn't do anything for me either," I said, and added, "Now a book with women in it ..."

Alison was off pursuing a photo book with women in it; couldn't find any. I picked up a couple of magazines (literary mixed with S/M on the shelves. Alison talking about Death in Venice: "I thought the man was — with the boy — that there were those undertones..." Circumventing the words 'gay' and 'homosexual,' which she does not do when she talks about her brother.)

Suddenly, she said, "I'm not gay, do you think I'm allowed here?" Then, firmly, "It's a free country! Free speech!"

"Anyone can come in here, Alison," I said.

As we left Glad Day, Alison said decisively, "I don't think you're gay. You haven't had that much experience!"

I told her, calmly, how I knew male or female makes no difference — how I had been to bed with a woman and gotten lost in her body, how wonderful the experience had been for me.

(Continued on page 3)

## Lavender Jane Loves ALL Women

"Alix Dobkin."

Take that name and roll it around in your head. What images does it bring to mind?

The name Alix Dobkin conjures up some powerful labels: Lesbian. Separatist. Pioneer. Lover of women (or was that just lover of lesbians?)

For more than a decade Alix Dobkin has been a pioneer of women-oriented music. She has been out there on the women's circuit, performing steadily over the years. She has three albums to her credit — "Lavendar Jane Loves Women," "Living With Lesbians," and "XX Alix."

Now Alix Dobkin is singing a new tune — she wants to get her music out to ALL women — lesbian, bisexual and straight. On July 20, Alix performed to a large and enthusiastic audience in Cambridge, and on July 23 and 24 she performed in Provincetown. Her July 23 concert was recorded for use on her current projects — an album and an EP (extended play) record she hopes to release in the fall.

Both the album and the EP are entitled "Never Been Better," and represent many changes for Alix. First, they are targeted at a mass audience that includes lesbians and non-lesbians alike. The

(Continued on page 3)

## Harvard Policy Bans Discrimination

Harvard adopted a University-wide policy last month prohibiting discrimination in matters affecting all students, faculty, and staff. Adopted by the Corporation, the policy states:

"Harvard University's policy is to make decisions concerning applicants, students, faculty, and staff on the basis of the individual's qualifications to contribute to Harvard's educational objectives and institutional needs. The principle of not discriminating against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation [emphasis added], religion, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, veteran status, or disability unrelated to job or course of study requirements is consistent with the purpose of a university and the law. Harvard expects that those with whom it deals will comply with all applicable antidiscrimination laws."

Excerpted from The Balloon, August 9, 1985

The newsletter of The Boston Bisexual Women's Network



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy birthday to you, Robyn Ochs! October 5th is your BI-rthday, and the whole network wishes you a great big happy one! Without you, the BBWN would not be the best-organized and most active bi network in the universe. In fact, it probably wouldn't exist. Thank you for all your time, care, and apparently unlimited energy.

For those of you who would like to wish Robyn a Happy Birthday, her number is 491-8334.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL MONTH

Guess what, gals. September is the month in which each of us must dip into her coffer for the annual BBWN membership dues. As you probably can guess, the money that the network collects through dues is its major source of support, and every last dime counts. So, if you have the wherewithal to donate a little extra, it will be enormously appreciated!

Please don't forget to renew — in fact, do it NOW. Membership gets you the best bisexual newsletter in the country (no kidding), each issue thrill-packed and informative, with inside information on all the relevant bisexual events in the area.

Remember, it's your network! Your participation makes it happen. Come to meetings, come to Volunteer Night, write for the newsletter ... and for now, renew your membership.

**THINK  
MEMBER  
SHIP!**

## NEWSLETTER STAFF FOR THIS ISSUE

Mary-Charlotte Domandi, editor and layout; Evelyn A., assistant editor and layout; Betty Aubut, consulting editor and advertising; Elissa Malcohn, typing (thanks again!!!) [you're welcome!—E]. Special thanks for the tons of help provided by Betty Aubut, Robyn Ochs, Maya Costley, Blake Walton, Elissa Malcohn, Stacie M., Beth I., Diana G., Sylvia S., and Lindy.

## REMINDER ABOUT LAST NAMES

As you may have noticed in the last issue, the newsletter will now print your last name (rather than just your last initial, as was the previous policy), but you must specifically instruct us to do so on whatever articles or letters you submit.

## BODYWORKS



MARGARITA ASCENCIO  
576-1493

53 RIVER STREET, CAMBRIDGE, NR CENTRAL SQUARE <sup>Ⓟ</sup>

Coordinating Committee  
Meeting Minutes

The Coordinating Committee met on July 28. The following topics were discussed:

- \* Next general meeting — topic was set (see calendar). Ideas for future general meetings included a panel of women therapists with different sexual identifications — lesbian, straight, and bisexual.
- \* The retreat — what was done and what was still needed. It was agreed that all proceeds from the retreat should go to BBWN, since we did all the work.
- \* Personals ads in the newsletter — should they be published at all, should they be for women only or for both women and men? The decision for now is that only network women will be able to place personals. A phone survey to network women not in the CC to get more opinions on this issue was proposed.
- \* Ad rates — raised to \$7.50/issue, \$20/3 issues. Somewhere Else gets a free ad in exchange for being so great to let us use their space for general meetings.
- \* Robyn at the New England Women's Musical Retreat (NEWMR) — Robyn was approved for BBWN backing for the discussion group she will lead there. The title: "How does it feel to be Bisexual at the NEWMR?"
- \* Membership rates — September is the start of the new membership drive. New rates are as follows:  
\$6.....Limited income  
\$12.....Regular  
\$25.....Sustainer  
\$50.....Near Goddess
- \* Budget report — Gay Pride March paid for itself. See treasurer's report.
- \* Whale watch — with the women of BAGLY and Daughters of Bilitis, possibly at the end of September.



## TREASURER'S REPORT: BALANCE SHEET

● <u>BALANCE AS OF JUNE 1, 1985</u>	\$339.68
● <u>EXPENSES</u>	
Pride Day Brunch	102.51
Community Church of Boston -	
Donation for use of space for brunch	20.00
Balance on 6 dozen BBWN T-shirts	
(Total cost: \$289.80)	189.80
Pride Day - Fee for exhibit space	10.00
450 first class postage stamps for	
urgent July-Aug. newsletter mailing	99.00
Newsletter preparation and printing	182.28
2500 "Security" envelopes with return	
address and bulk mail permit imprint	132.00
May-June bank account charges	13.50
Post Office, to cover "Return to Sender"	
fees	20.00
	<u>\$769.09</u>
● <u>DEPOSITS</u>	
Pride Day income (brunch and	
T-shirt sales)	413.00
Membership dues, newsletter	
advertising fees collected	172.50
May-June bank account interest	2.56
	<u>\$588.06</u>
● NEW BALANCE AS OF AUGUST 1, 1985	<u>\$158.65</u>



JOURNAL EXCERPTS (Continued from page 1)

Partly posturing - I usually don't defend my sexuality but I took great lengths, this time, to respond to Alison's denial - which had caught me by surprise. Thought: Why don't you tell her she can believe what she wants and leave it at that?

"I was attracted to a woman once," she said. "Not that I did anything. I used to think I might be lesbian because of that but I know I'm not now."

...[In the evening] I went upstairs to work, and the phone rang. Ross.

"What do you think of that demonstration this afternoon?" he asked.

I said, "If I hadn't been wanting to get home I'd have joined it."

Then he said, "I don't think you can raise a kid right with two men or two women; you need a man and a woman. It's natural. Not that I have anything against gay people..."

I thought up at the ceiling: What brought on this endurance test? And I said, very firmly and not defensive at all, "I think that what every child needs is love, and acceptance. And it doesn't matter what sex the parents are - what about the single parent who's got to raise a kid all alone and with no help? From anyone? Or kids raised by a man and a woman and get abused? I don't think having two gay parents poses any problem as long as there is love - and it doesn't affect the kid's sexual preference, either."

"Oh I know that," he said. He held to his argument. I held to mine.

(To be continued, as life goes on.)

— Elissa Malcohn

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LAVENDAR JANE (Continued from page 1)

content of her songs remains strongly feminist, but in her new album she only once uses the word 'lesbian.' Alix says this does not reflect a deviation from her strong lesbian identity. "All of my songs are written from a lesbian consciousness, a lesbian perspective, but the language has changed. Many women don't relate to the word 'lesbian' and I want to reach all women."

Does this mean that Alix is no longer a separatist? No, Alix still considers herself a separatist, her transformation being one of degree. "Women are not only the priority of my life, they're the substance." Alix says that extreme separatism no longer works for her: "You can't live like that. It's too exhausting. It's too hard." Alix says that in her case the pendulum has swung to one end and started to come back. She is now finding more cooperative relationships with some men and no longer feels the need to completely dissociate herself from all men. "Separatism is a consciousness, a system of priorities. It's not a lifestyle, as there are many different separatist lifestyles. There are separatists who work with men all of the time yet consider themselves separatist. It's really a consciousness, a filter through which we look at the world, how we make choices. ... We hear the term manhating used, and usually that just refers to women's indifference to men. Woman hating, on the other hand, is basically a pillar of this society." Or, as Alix phrased it at the July 20 concert, "People are always saying that lesbians are such man haters. Au contraire."

Musically, Alix's new album may come as quite a shock to her long-time fans. Produced by rocker Carol McDonald, and including her band, "WITCH," this album will be a mix of pop, rock, folk and ethnic songs, and will represent quite a shift from the acoustic style Alix's fans are familiar with. Forty-four year old Alix has been influenced by rap and new wave music, thanks largely to her teenage daughter. Her strongly feminist and woman-identified album includes such songs as Boy/Girl Rap, a rap song which mounts a scathing attack against women's conditioning and the construction of the heterosexual state: "It's a sorry situation, a pitiful state, what a good woman settles for to be straight," uplifting songs dealing with women's power and strength, and songs which deal with the differences within the women's community. One song, entitled, "Crazy Dance," is about accepting our differences. Alix introduced this song at the July 20 concert by saying, "When I first came out I thought now I'm a lesbian and all lesbians will agree. In the past 14 years I've found out it's not true. I'm learning to allow others the space and the time to make their own mistakes." The chorus of Crazy Dance goes as follows: "One step forward, two steps back/seems like a crazy dance to do/One step forward, two steps back/These are hard times to live through/

(Continued on page 4)

## ATTENTION !!

The BBWN newsletter needs a new *ad manager*. Betty A. is retiring from this illustrious post and is looking for a replacement to spend a few hours every two months doing the ads. It's fun and it really helps the newsletter survive. For more information on what is involved, please call Betty at 497-9555. Thanks!!!



(Continued from page 3)

Time to hold on to the long view." Also on this album will be a new arrangement of the well-known love song to self "The Woman in Your Life is You."

Alix wants her music to reach all women. She believes that her lesbian oriented music has important messages for all women. She cites theologian Mary E. Hunt's definition of lesbian as 'a woman who is radically serious about loving women' and says "There is a little bit of lesbian in every woman. This is the part of every woman who loves herself and this is the part I speak to. This is the energy and consciousness I focus on. ... There are many kinds of lesbians and I want to include them all. This is not just a parlor game. This is survival."

—Robyn Ochs

Note: This article is based on the following: July 20 Alix Dobkin concert, July 20 interview with Alix Dobkin, and viewing of 1985 videotape by Cecilia Denning entitled "So Precious a Place: Women Speak on Women-Only Space," which includes extensive interviews with Alix Dobkin. First printed in Sojourner.)

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## MIXED MEDIA

Dear Ann Landers:

I'll be brief. I know you have thousands of letters that need your attention.

What are the chances for marriage when the husband tells his wife he has "sexual preference" problems? He says he wants to stay married but is not sure he can remain faithful.

I love this man and confess I did not have the faintest notion that he was gay. Am I fooling myself when I say I believe we can have a solid marriage? Our sex life is good. We want children. I have a terrible fear it is only a matter of time before he leaves me and becomes part of the gay community. Please help me. I am Struggling In Des Moines.

Dear Struggling In Des Moines:

Some women are able to remain happily married to husbands who have an eye for males. Others are not. I have no way of knowing your threshold of tolerance in this area.

Of one thing you can be sure. Married bisexuals, when presented with a choice, invariably go for members of their own sex. Furthermore, when the proclivity is present, they can be expected to wander off occasionally. This decision must be yours. I wish you luck.

## BBWN Retreat

People came to the retreat with different hopes and expectations. Many were met, some exceeded, some not. But everyone agreed that the warmth and openness given by and to everyone who came could not have been more perfect. The atmosphere — of complete tolerance, acceptance, forgiveness of all sins, the warmth and generosity was, for me, the best part of the weekend. The group, diverse as it was, never split into factionalism (men vs. women, bi vs. straight vs. gay), or even social cliques. The dance Saturday night was a joyous event, not only exciting to participate in, but also a joy to behold. If only we could all carry this over into the outside world...

### Workshops (okay, Playshops)

We would have needed a week to hold all the suggested workshops! (Conference planners, please keep the list of ideas!) There certainly wasn't time to attend all the ones I was interested in. So, rather than meeting notes (At the Womyn relating to Womyn we discussed bi-phobia; at the Spirituality we discussed what do we mean by the term and how do we relate it to our lives), herewith an overview:

Beautiful weather! It must be said, thank Mother Nature for the glorious weather. (Curse Mattatut for the mosquitos!) Not everyone was comfortable with total or even semi-nudity. But, when fourteen people are naked, and you're the only one fully clothed ... People grew visibly more relaxed as the weekend progressed, stopped being self-conscious and worrying whether what they said was "politically correct."

Unfortunately, some potentially interesting workshops did not take place (AIDS, parenting, did I miss the puppet theatre?). But the Sweat Lodge, everyone agreed, was "intense." A little too intense for some of us! — but a rewarding experience just the same. So many different viewpoints were presented, both in the workshops and casual discussions, and all were treated reasonably, talked about calmly and with respect. So unlike "discussions" we've all had before!

### Food

The food was provided by members of Another Place. Even confirmed meat-eaters had to admit that it was delicious, and always interesting! The Peach-berry Crisp Saturday night deserves special praise, and many thanks to Chris for his noble efforts in getting the ice cream to put on top of it! (We will all try very hard to forget the Chocolate Bar Orgy that followed!)

### Friends Near and Far

Attendees from so many places: Boston, Providence, Albany, Poughkeepsie, NYC, Maine, Philadelphia — I'm sure I've missed some! We saw the newsletter of a bi-sexual network in London. It's so exciting to think of so many bisexual groups active and growing! (Does that make us bi-national?)

### thankyouthankyouthankyou

To the Organizers: Betty, Lesley, Maya and Paula — thanks, with love for a lot of work, and it all went incredibly smoothly.

To Lesley, for the knowledge and physical endurance to lead two sweat lodges!

To Ruth, for the numerology and fun.

To All the facilitators — and contributors.

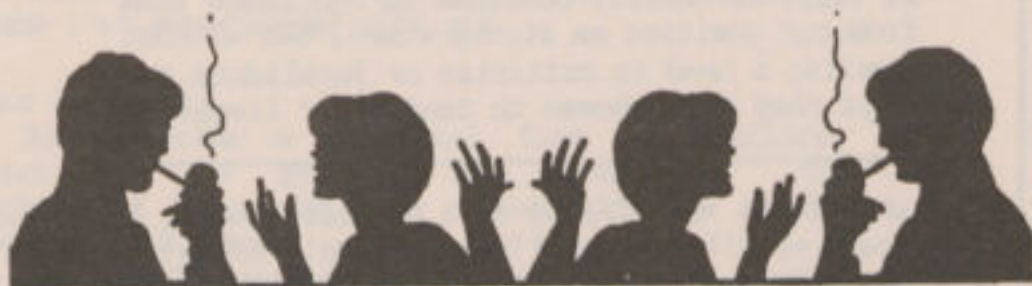
To Charles, for instruction and demonstration in Massage.

(Continued on page 5)



To Laura, for driving done above and beyond the cause.  
 To everyone at Another Place, for food, help and space.  
 To BBWN and BBMN generally, for sponsoring the retreat, and  
 To everyone who came. I loved meeting you all.  
 SAME TIME, NEXT YEAR!!

—Jan F.



TAMARA B

#### MY FIRST SECOND ANNUAL BISEXUAL RETREAT

I had one of the most relaxing, well-fed, well-rested, and stimulating weekends all summer at the Second Annual Bisexual Retreat. The setting, Another Place, in Greenville, New Hampshire, is a rambling old house with ideal spaces for group meetings and private spaces for more intimate conversations. The staff was friendly and made an effort to make us feel at home. Once people began to feel comfortable with each other nudity in the back field became the norm. There was some uncomfortableness in mixed groups but I noticed that once we began opening up and talking to one another the atmosphere became more relaxed. Massages were freely given and received all weekend, I gave and received two myself. Some of the topics in the workshops were: Womyn Relating to Womyn, Womyn and Men Relating to Each Other, Sexism, Monogamy and Non-Monogamy in Bisexual Relationships, Committed Bisexual Relationships, Bisexuality and Spirituality, and two sweat lodges. The ones I attended were provocative and revealing. The highlight for me was to be with a group of such diverse and unique people who opened themselves up for some very intimate conversations. The sleeping arrangements were divided up into men's only, womyn's only and mixed rooms which I think worked out well for most everybody. The food was vegetarian and delicious, although I would have liked to have had more snacks and fruit available for those of us who were eating light and not wanting to eat scheduled meals.

The retreat itself was well organized and ran pretty smoothly. My only comment would be that more play activities be made available during free time, although the spontaneous numerology readings were a riot and the sweat lodges were well attended. The guided fantasy was a great idea but I think the topic was too sexually stimulating, which brings me to another topic, public displays of passion. I had some trouble with this and suspect that I wasn't the only one. I wouldn't want to say that all sexual activity be banned at the retreat but I think that guidelines need to be set up for what's appropriate in the more public areas of the house and in the rooms that are being shared by a number of people. I trust that this issue will be addressed before the next retreat.

Overall I had a great time. I met some interesting people and made a special connection with a person who reminded me that my only responsibility was to relax and have fun. I have had some new thoughts about my own community and I feel like I've tapped into a wonderful network of renaissance people who are bound and determined to change the way we view ourselves and our sexuality.

—Ginny L.

## Bisexual Women

From: No Turning Back: Lesbian and Gay Liberation for the '80s Reprinted with permission of New Society Publishers, 4722 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143. \$9.45 postpaid.

It seems important to distinguish between people who are functionally bisexual and those who identify as bisexual. Many gay people, female and male, occasionally desire to have sex with people of the opposite gender. This makes them functionally bisexual, although their identification remains gay. The same is true of people who may identify as primarily heterosexual but who may have had some same-sex experiences. A truly bisexual person, on the other hand, is strongly attracted to people of both sexes. Many politically aware bisexual people of this type, especially women, have chosen a lesbian or gay label for the time being because it does not seem to be possible to make a strong feminist statement from a bisexual position.

Bisexuality can be seen as a no-win situation in several ways. Mainstream society may insist upon assuming that a bisexual woman is still "basically" heterosexual, the men she relates to may assume she is more committed to them than to other women. Or they may see her as "kinky," relating her bisexuality to her sexual practices only and not to her political beliefs at all. The lesbians she comes in contact with, on the other hand, may respond to her with distrust because she is viewed as lacking commitment to women, and as giving aid and comfort to the enemy. For this reason many lesbian separatists refuse to deal with bisexual women. The whole question of bisexuality brings up hostility, confusion, and conflict. Bisexuality may be seen as either politically incorrect or, at best, as merely a stage in a woman's coming-out process. It is genuinely difficult for those who are bisexually identified to be taken seriously on either side of the struggle. They have in some ways taken on the best and the worst of both worlds.

It is important to be especially supportive of bisexual women who have chosen to call themselves lesbian, for in doing so they have stated very clearly that they place women's concerns first, politically and personally. To be critical of a woman who has publicly accepted and stood by a lesbian label simply because she has privately revealed that she identifies more closely with bisexuality is divisive and damaging to the unity we need if we as women are to be taken seriously. The larger issue is to unify all women, regardless of their sexual preference, to join in the struggle for liberation. Patriarchy will continue to dominate and separate us as long as we see the issue as one of "political correctness." This concept in itself seems to be cut out of a patriarchal mold. It seems negative to pressure people to label themselves according to a pre-set collection of definitions that may have little or nothing to do with their life experiences. Equally damaging is the tendency to place so much emphasis on sexual practice. We have stated repeatedly that being gay involves much more than who one sleeps with. Being gay and feminist, while it does mean supporting our right to be sexual with others of the same gender, also means commitment, struggle, and

(Continued on page 6)



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CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

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having a vision of what the world would be like if we were all free to act on our own feelings of love for one another.

The "more lesbian-feminist than thou" trap or the desire to be "politically correct" can often take as much energy from women as does struggling with men. If a woman has committed herself to other women and spends a good deal of time and energy dealing with women's issues and women's culture, she deserves support even if she is continuing to relate to men in some ways. The bisexual woman, in turn, must respect and support the needs of gay women for entirely lesbian space. Since we as lesbians are not involved in relationships with men, it may be easier for us to see the problems in a relationship that a bisexual woman may be having with a man. We have a responsibility to challenge her when it seems to us that a particular relationship is sexist or otherwise oppressive, but we do not have the right to assume that all opposite-sex relationships are dominated by sexism or that all same-sex relationships are free from oppression. Each woman has a right to choose for herself with whom she will associate and where her energies will go.

There are, fortunately, some men who have worked very hard to free themselves of sexist, racist, and classist attitudes. These men are learning how to nurture others and how to be supportive of women without draining them. We must demand that they prove they can be trusted in these areas by demonstrating these qualities in their relationships with one another; however, we must not deny their existence or require women to give up relationships with such men in order to be accepted as our political allies.

Bisexual women are in a potentially powerful position when they are in relationships both with other women and with the kind of anti-sexist men just mentioned. A politically active, aware bisexual woman can serve as a model for one of the roles of the new society we are trying to build. What keeps lesbian separatists from seeing this and offering bisexual women support and appreciation is our own internalized oppression, both as women and as lesbians. This means, as we have said before, that we have heard negative things about ourselves from others for so long that we have to some degree begun to believe them, and that these beliefs are so ingrained that we have trouble recognizing them as a part of the wider oppression we are fighting. When we are comfortable in our own minds about our sexual identity and our political choices, we will cease to view the struggle as a competition in which each side gains or loses points based on how many people are wearing our label. We will be able to state our own needs and visions powerfully and to accept as valid the needs and visions of others.

We have a responsibility to work through our fears about being politically or personally alone. Then we will be able to give up the notion that love and energy are finite resources and that bisexual women will always give more to men. Once we as lesbians have worked through the old feelings of being helpless and powerless victims, we can assist bisexual women, and the anti-sexist men they relate to, to be natural and powerful allies. We will, of course, continue to challenge them from our position as strong women, but without feeling a need to criticize or invalidate the ways they have chosen to lead their lives.

When I was identifying as a bisexual woman, I found myself in a continual struggle not with the men I was associating with but with the lesbians I wanted to be closer to. I found I was using most of my political time arguing over the validity of my relationships with men and defending my right to be who I thought I was. Even though I had a woman lover, the fact that I didn't feel comfortable with a lesbian label seemed more important an issue to my sisters than the fact that the great majority of my time and energy was going to women. I was continually put in the difficult situation of going to my supportive men friends for nurturing and healing because of the almost continual put-downs I was getting from lesbians who claimed to be feminists. Finally I decided to adopt a lesbian label just to see if it would shut people up. It did, and now I seem to have established some credibility with my former critics, despite the fact that I still relate to my male friends.

## Bi The Way

Dear BBWN:

It's a good idea to print a reminder to readers about the BBWN Newsletter's "answer column," "Bi the Way." And I'd like to add to it while clarifying one part.

The people in Jamaica say, "Only a fool leans upon her own (mis)understanding." While I am delighted to serve as the "consultant" for Bi the Way, I want readers to know answers to letters do not spring only from my (partial) pool of knowledge. Like Ann L., Abby van B., and other "answerers," I rely on a network of informants and experts to support my efforts to make useful answers to the questions Boston Bi women send in. This resource-networking stems directly from the best of social work tradition, and separates therapists who are social workers from all the other types of counselors and therapists.

I hope this point will encourage women to make use of the "Bi the Way" column as a resource for all kinds of information related to your needs. This is what makes it fun to write and also fun to read! Love,

—Bet MacArthur LICSW

Dear Bet,

I started my sexual life as a heterosexual, but gradually drifted into celibacy which allowed me the space to recognize the impelling emotional attraction I have for women. I would like to have an intimate relationship with a woman and feel I am ready emotionally; but sexually I do not feel the same passion of attraction for women as I felt (and still sometimes feel) for men. Do you think

(Continued on page 7)



(Continued from page 6)

that once I become sexually active with a woman/women I will learn to feel more passion for women? Is this a common conflict among bisexual women — feeling split between strong emotional attachments to women and strong sexual attachment to men? This split feels particularly painful to me as I contemplate the possibility of an intimate relationship, knowing that for now men are not a viable option for me and yet hoping that my future relationship with a woman can be as passionate as some I've experienced with men.

Dear Unsigned:

You describe a universal form of conflict, which can be painful until resolved. The content of your conflict, to be sure, is common for bisexual women.

Passion is stimulated by systems of mental imagery (conscious and unconscious) which, for heterosexuals, is continually reinforced by the culture. You may not have had enough experience with women yet to have built a "data base" of erotic imagery with which you feel comfortable. To build that data base, you'll have to take some risks. You might benefit from the new book *Lesbian Sex* by JoAnn Loulan [see the August issue of *Sojourner*, page 24], which isn't only about lesbian sex. I like Loulan's emphasis on willingness and its relationship to emotional as well as physical intimacy.

The way your conflict feels painful says more about how you handle internal conflict than about your bisexuality. While you are fortunate to be able to feel 'impelling emotional attraction' to people; add trust and a willingness to give to yourself (as well as to the other) a warm, safe, potentially enlightening relationship.

Q: Doesn't a woman tennis player like Martina Navratilova, a self-admitted gay, have an unfair advantage over heterosexual competitors? Aren't lesbians or bisexuals invariably physically stronger than women who are "straight?" — Kitty L., Charlottesville, Va.

A: Not necessarily. A woman's sexual proclivities do not determine her physical strength. One reason Martina is better than most of her competitors is the long years she has devoted to training and practice.

From: *Parade*, July 28, 1985

## Conference

On October 19-20 an extraordinary conference is taking place at Hampshire College. "Celebrate Our Unity and Diversity," sponsored by over 30 organizations, including BBWN and the New England Regional Committee, is billed as "A gathering of celebration of all gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. This conference is an opportunity to grow, learn, and rejoice through the sharing of our common experiences and the recognition of our diversity." A large number of workshops will be held, including several on Bisexuality — one of them, "Choosing a Bisexual Identity," led by BBWN's own Robyn Ochs!

If you are thinking of attending, write to: CONFERENCE, Box 118, Amherst, MA 01004-0118. There will most likely be quite a few women from BBWN going, so let's get in touch with each other to organize transportation. If you don't know anyone else in the network, write to the PO box or come to one of the meetings.

## Reader's Forum

Hello good people.

We will be moving in the next few days. We really appreciate hearing from you (it's lonely up here!) and when we get a bit more stable financially we'll send more practical support — but for now we send our thanks for all you do.

—Amy and Cherry, Andover, Mass.

Dear BBWN,

I must continue my long-distance love affair with BBWN! Keep sending the newsletter — it keeps me alive. I look forward to becoming a member as soon as I am financially stable (there are drawbacks to being a recent college graduate...) Love in all directions,

—Pam M., Houston, Texas

A bi on the Bayou.

Dear BBWN:

I want to let all of you know how much thanks we truly owe to the core of Network women who have shouldered the responsibilities of the past year. Proof — the dramatic difference in our reception at Gay Pride this year. Last year, our presence was merely tolerated. Quiet acceptance — no boo's, no yea's. But this year the spontaneous cheers of welcome and support along the way were overwhelming, both in number and emotion. Of course, the crowd was also responding to our boisterous songs and chants. (Toto, did you hear them? ... Faggots & dykes & bi's — OH MY!) The crowning moment was hearing the rally spokesperson welcome those marching for the fifteenth time, the first time and yes! she welcomed the bisexuals!

Now, this validation of our identity didn't just blossom magically. It results from energetic bisexuals (women, I must add) organizing ourselves and forcing our presence, politics and power to be recognized and discussed in the community. Some individuals have been more active than others. Gays, lesbians and straights have been personally dealing with these articulate, independent, brave women and, I think, they're wildly impressed! I am.

So, the rest of us owe these committed women thanks, support and recognition of their accomplishments. At Gay Pride, I felt budding seedlets of bi-privilege. If such a wild notion ever thrives in the years ahead, it will be because of you wonderful BBWN women — our Bionic Pioneers! Thank you —

—Cathy Jay

Dear BBWN:

Sorry it's taken us so long to get back to you, but we really have been busy! We wanted to bring you up to date — June 16th we will be having our third large meeting — a pot luck brunch. We got almost 40 women our first big meeting, and about 20 at our second (our communications system wasn't real organized). We have approx. 65 women on the mailing list after 3 meetings and the response has been wonderful! 3 support groups have started this month, and more will be getting off the ground on the 16th. We organized a small contingent to campfest (a local women's festival) where we networked with a woman who wanted to do a bi workshop. The reception was somewhat hostile, but at least we're out there. We are also organizing a contingent to Gay Pride in NY on June 30. We are unofficially the Phila. Bi Women's network but are talking about names and logos. It really is happening. We'll stay in touch, and hope you will keep us posted, if interesting stuff comes up. Take care,

—Lianne (on behalf of Lysbeth and Laura)



## Calendar

September 3 (Tuesday) Daughters of Bilitis Forum "Gay and Lesbian Rights — What Can We Do to Help." Peg Lorenz will speak on grass-roots lobbying. 8:00 PM at Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave., Cambridge.

September 5 (Thursday) AIDS FUNDRAISER: Pre-Broadway Lily Tomlin show, "The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe" at Wilbur Theater, and after-performance party with food, drinks, and entertainment at the Wang Center. Tickets for both \$37.50, call 536-7733. Also call this number for information on future events sponsored by the AIDS Action Committee.

September 7 (Saturday) POETRY READING: Pat Parker, black lesbian poet, reads her work in a benefit for Gay Community News, at 8:00, Paine Hall, Harvard University. \$5 donation requested, call GCN at 426-4469 for more information. Wheelchair accessible, interpreted for hearing-impaired.

September 7 (Saturday) CONCERT: Eric Bogle and John Munro at Sanders Theater, Harvard University, at 8:00 PM. Tickets \$7.50 in advance, \$8.50 at the door. Call 547-5704 for more information.

September 10 (Tuesday) Daughters of Bilitis Coming-Out Rap. 8:00 PM at Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. For more information on DOB events, call 661-3633.

September 15 (Sunday) The Metropolitan Community Church of Boston, a church of the Lesbian and Gay community, presents "Celebration of a New Ministry" at 7:00 PM, Old West Church, 131 Cambridge St., Boston. Call 523-7664 for more information.

September 18 (Wednesday) BBWN General Meeting at Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin St., Boston, 7:00 PM. Panel discussion on "Labels"—Bisexual, Lesbian and Straight women will discuss the

labels they have chosen, question period and discussion groups will follow.

September 22 (Sunday) Coordinating Committee meeting at Robyn's house, 6:00 PM. Call 491-8334 for directions and information.

September 28 (Saturday) Daughters of Bilitis Dance. Door prizes. Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 8 to 12 PM. Women only! For more information on DOB events, call 661-3633.

September 30 (Monday) VOLUNTEER NIGHT at Robyn's house, 7:50 PM. Call 491-8334 for information. Fast times, good fun. Be there, new faces especially! Bring food.

October 5 (Saturday) First planning meeting for the Third Regional Conference on Bisexuality, in Providence, RI. Call Beth at 643-3726 if you are interested in attending.

October 7 (Monday) Happy birthday Angela!

October 7 (Monday) BBWN Introductory Meeting at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Cambridge 7:30 P.M. Call Robyn for information, 491-8334

October 19-20 (Sat-Sun) CONFERENCE: "Celebrate Our Unity and Diversity" at Hampshire College. A gathering in celebration of all Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals. For registration and information write to: Conference, Box 118, Amherst, MA 01004-0118. See below for more on this event.

October 27 (Sunday) Coordinating Committee meeting at Robyn's house, 4:00 PM (Note new time). Call 491-8334 for directions and information.

October 28 (Monday) VOLUNTEER NIGHT at Robyn's house 7:30 PM. If you didn't go in September you have another chance. Or be square.

November 18 (Monday) Charnan Bray's birthday.

November 23 (Saturday) CONCERT: Connie Kaldor. Paine Hall, Harvard Univ., 8:00 PM. Call Robyn at 491-8334 for information.

## ...And Rita Mae Brown Loves Men

[Rita Mae] Brown's next book is about a woman who loves — yikes! — a man. "I wanted to write about a really vibrant heterosexual relationship," says Brown, who has had long-term liaisons of that sort but prefers women. "I'm no more ashamed to be called a lesbian than I am to be called a wife. It's part of being a woman."

... She writes four hours a day, six days a week, having just finished a historical novel about a woman who disguises herself to join the Confederate Army and be with her husband. There is time to think, and to deflect endless questions. "I'm not interested in sex at all," she once said. "I'm interested in how people can love one another."

Excerpted from "Update: Life Without Martina," Mark D. Uehling with Nikki Pinke Greenberg. Newsweek, August 19, 1985

# NEW WORDS

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## Bisexual Anthology Statement of Purpose

Our purpose is to create a channel for those of us who wish to express feelings and thoughts on bisexuality. Our goal is to publish an anthology on bisexuality in 1987.

We intend that this anthology be both informational and educational; that it demystify and describe the bisexual and his/her identities, and in so doing, acknowledge and validate bisexuality as a real and valuable choice in people's lives; and, that the anthology on bisexuality also expose homophobia, its false premises, and the oppression that results from fear of differences.

We welcome diaries, short stories, essays, poems, drawings, music and lyrics, and photos, including photos of sculpture. We encourage submissions from people of all colors, classes, backgrounds, ages, sexual preferences and physical challenges. We invite experienced as well as inexperienced writers to inquire about submitting materials, and to offer their ideas about the anthology.

Please contact the Bisexual Anthology Collective at the BBWN P.O. Box if interested. You will then receive more information from us.

We assure strict confidentiality.



# NOT THE BBWN NEWSLETTER

November 1, 1985

Dear Members and Friends of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network!

We know that you have come to expect your BBWN Newsletter every other month at about this time. You have come to expect information, ideas and offers from a distinctively bisexual perspective, on a regular basis, at very low cost. In fact, many of you receive your newsletter for free! The BBWN established early on the radical and enlightened policy that no one would be excluded from receiving our valuable newsletter just because they chose not to join our organization. For some women, "joining" is a weighty and difficult decision, a step they may not choose to take. Others can't afford a membership, and others simply don't want to put out...the money.

If you haven't figured it out already, this *is* a dreaded pitch letter. And I have been dreading the task of writing it for several weeks now. I am the "invisible treasurer" of the BBWN. I'm the one who gets your contributions (especially lately, in the midst of our fall fundraising drive), takes them to the bank, deals with the tellers and merchants who look askance at the B-word, and writes out the checks for newsletters, postage and Pride Day t-shirts (as well as for the Carribean Cruises of C.C. members!).

Lately I've been worried about our fiscal fitness. Expenses average about \$200 a month, and each year we just make it through the lean summer months and into the fall's much-needed income. But "just making it" is not the best way to run an organization, especially one as unique as the BBWN. Lack of money inhibits our ability to be a good resource, to advocate effectively, to broaden our outreach, and to plan creatively for the future. The very *fear* of lack of money inhibits our spirit and our potential for growth. I, at least, want to know with certainty that the Network and the newsletter will both be around for years to come. The "sexual revolution" may have been a passing fad; but sexual freedom, the freedom to identify and enjoy ourselves as we choose, and the right to live and work freely, and to adopt and raise children, are things we - as bisexuals and lesbians - can never take for granted.

I ask you, then, to consider making a contribution now, or *again* if that's the case. Preserve the BBWN by helping preserve its financial security.

There's nothing else like it!

Sincerely yours,  
*Sylvia*  
BBWN Treasurer



## BBWN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Nov. 10, Sun. **Deadline** for Dec.-Jan. BBWN newsletter. Submit original material, along with personals, classifieds, and calendar announcements, to P.O. Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA, 02130.
- Nov. 11, Mon. No open rap tonight (Veteran's Day).
- Nov. 18, Mon. Possible open rap night, 7:30pm at Women's Center (46 Pleasant St.) in Cambridge. Call Betty if you are interested in meeting, 497-9555.
- Nov. 18, Mon. Happy Birthday Charnan!
- Nov. 20, Wed. BBWN **General Meeting**. Discussion topic: "Internalized Homophobia." Upstairs at Somewhere Else, 7:30pm.
- Nov. 23, Sat. Connie Kaldor in concert at Harvard's Paine Hall, 8:00pm. Tickets \$7.50 in advance, \$8.50 at the door. Tickets available at New Words Bookstore, Sandy's Music, Alpert Gallery, Concert Charge and all Strawberries Record outlets.  
Concert produced by BBWN's own Robyn Ochs!
- Nov. 24, Sun. BBWN **Coordinating Committee** Meeting. Issues for discussion and decision: Long-term planning and policy-making (this includes the question of men's participation in the Network), and organizing the BBWN holiday party.  
Meeting at Robyn's, 4:00pm. Call 491-8334 for directions. Please come and share your ideas!
- Nov. 25, Mon. Newsletter **Stuff** Night! Preparing 600 newsletters for mailing is a crucial - and fun - activity. Join the dedicated ranks of bisexual stuffers, 7:30pm at Robyn's. Call 491-8334 for directions.

### ± CLASSIFIEDS ±

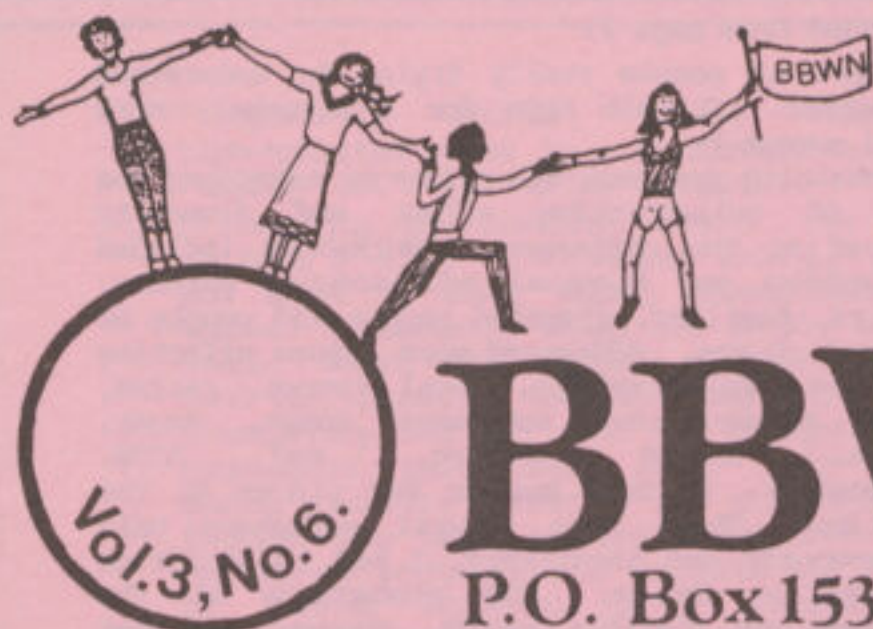
Second "Women Over 35" support group now forming. (The first was a tremendous success and is still going strong.) Call Betty at 497-9555 for info.

Women interested in working on our annual Regional Conference on Bisexuality, which will take place March 8-9 in Portland, ME, contact Beth at 643-3726. It may seem early but there's a lot to be done!

Pledge of Resistance women's affinity group now forming. Help prevent U.S. intervention in Central America. Call Robyn for details, 491-8334.

P.I. bisexual lesbian feminist from N.J. seeking cooperative household in Boston area for Dec. 1st. Non-smoking vegetarian, appreciate the aesthetics of cleanliness. Call Eve collect at 201-420-0734.





# BBWN

P.O. Box 1534  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130



## Choosing Bisexuality

There were two workshops focused specifically on bisexuality at the Western Mass-based "Celebrate our Unity and Diversity," a conference in celebration of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.

One, "Choosing a Bisexual Identity," for women only, was facilitated by Robyn Ochs, of BBWN, and brought together a wide range of women. Some who called themselves lesbians, others who called themselves bisexuals, and others, who didn't call themselves anything at all.

A lot of sharing went on, with women explaining what their concerns around sexuality/bisexuality are, and why they chose to attend a workshop on bisexuality. A feeling of great relief seemed to be the consensus, as women listened, relaxed, and realized they are not alone — and certainly not "crazy" — for having their feelings.

Some women who identified as lesbians said they were feeling drawn to a bisexual identity because they didn't want to deny their past involvements with men, and felt there was a possibility of, at some point in the future, other involvements with men. Some also expressed fear of rejection by their lesbian friends, and the lesbian community.

Women who identified as bisexuals expressed concerns around whether one can be bisexual or monogamous; the struggle of feeling pressured to "decide" whether they are lesbian or heterosexual; and finally, the relief at being able to own their bisexuality.

In small groups, women were able to share some thoughts and feelings in-depth with one another, and then back in the larger group, a brainstorming session focused on how to go about creating a positive association with choosing a bisexual identity. Some of these ideas are:

- \*\* Find other bisexuals, and form a bisexual support group in your area.
- \*\* Join the local gay and lesbian speakers bureau.
- \*\* "Come out" about your bisexuality whenever, and wherever, you can.
- \*\* Attend gay pride marches, carrying banners with positive slogans about bisexuality.
- \*\* Talk to lesbian friends, and heterosexual friends, about your bisexuality.

If you have more ideas, send them in to the newsletter. Many thanks to Robyn for facilitating the workshop, and to all of the women who shared.

— Eva C.

## Unity Conference

"Celebrate Our Unity and Diversity" was the theme given to a conference held in Amherst, Massachusetts on October 19th and 20th where 320 gay men, lesbians and bisexuals gathered to do just that.

The conference was presented by the Hampshire College Women's Center, Lifeline Institute, Inc., the Valley Gay and Lesbian Alliance and Face to Face: A Gay and Lesbian Speakers Bureau and sponsored by over thirty organizations including BBWN. It was advertised as "an opportunity to grow, learn and rejoice through the sharing of our common experiences and the recognition of our diversity," a loving prompt for working towards acceptance of ourselves within a community.

Upon receiving notice about the conference, I was impressed by its low cost in comparison to that of other conferences. There was a reduced rate if you registered early and special rates offered for students and low income people. Lunches were only \$3. per day. A separate fee was charged for an optional awards banquet and Harvest Ball to be held on Saturday night. All in all — a reasonably affordable weekend.

The conference itself was basically well organized. It was held in Franklin Patterson Hall at Hampshire College, a spacious building with wheelchair accessibility. Bulletin boards and literature, as well as a variety of vendors and artists selling their wares, lined the hallways. Diversity was indeed, everywhere. The halls buzzed with it.

This was the first gathering I'd attended in more than a year where gay men were present. I found the male energy a refreshing change. It integrated well and broadened my awareness of the need for unity between the sexes in our alternative communities. Also highlighting this was the appropriate inclusion of bisexuals at the conference. Apparently, this was the first New England conference ever where bisexuals have been recognized as a part of the community and their representation encouraged (vital). There were workshops addressing bisexual issues included in each series of workshops. The oppression and non-acceptance of bisexuals in the non-heterosexual community was acknowledged on many levels. The groundwork for identifying and dispelling myths about bisexuality was laid. I felt missing pieces fit together and a genuine

(Continued on page 2)

The newsletter of The Boston Bisexual Women's Network





# NEWSLETTER STAFF FOR THIS ISSUE

Evelyn A, editor and layout; Blake Walton, assistant editor and layout; Betty Aubut, consulting editor and advertising; Elissa Malcohn, typing. Special thanks to Mary-Charlotte Domandi, Betty Aubut, Kate K, and Sylvia S.

BEWN has a real "goddess" in our midst! For many months now, Elissa Malcohn has singlehandedly (actually, I think she uses both hands!) typed all the newsletter copy, GRATIS. Her services have saved us uncountable time and money, and have greatly enhanced the professional look of the newsletter. Besides working full time and being a typing whiz (120 w.p.m. at last count!), Elissa is a writer and avid fan of science fiction and poetry. She is a member of the Bisexual Anthology group, and contributes regularly to our newsletter. It's about time Elissa gets the thanks and attention she so richly deserves. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, ELISSA!!

The Editors

## CC MINUTES 10/27

Present: Sylvia S, Kate K, Robyn O, Sharon G, Cathy C.

1. Next General Meeting - Organized by Robyn and Cathy. Topic: Internalized Homophobia
2. Northeast Regional Committee on Bisexuality - A steering committee has been formed, composed of 6 people - 2 from BEWN, 1 from BBMN, 1 from Northern N.E., 1 from Central N.E., and one from the NY area. BEWN reps are Laura S. and Robyn O. This group will serve primarily to make financial decisions regarding the allocation of regional funds.
3. 3rd Regional Conference on Bisexuality. March 8-9 in Portland, ME. Program, registration, and publicity will be coordinated out of the Boston area. Volunteers are needed. If interested, call Beth.
4. Unity & Diversity Conference Oct. 19-20 at Hampshire College was a tremendous step toward coalition building between gays, lesbians and bis. 350 people attended, about 20-25% bi.
5. Next CC meeting will be a special meeting to discuss future direction of the Network. Topics to include: How can we better support one another? Politics of the network? Objection for next year; 5 years? Are we spreading ourselves too thin? What relationship should men have to BEWN? Ways of coalition building with other women's groups.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance as of Sept. 20, 1985 \$252.43

### Expenses

Newsletter prep & printing	\$189.47
"Not the BEWN Newsletter"	59.17
Postage	4.40
Sojourner ad	25.00
Service Charge	2.75
	<hr/> \$280.79

### Deposits

Membership dues, newsletter	
advertising fees collected	\$689.50
Interest earned	1.11
	<hr/> \$690.61

Balance as of Nov. 20, 1985 \$718.97

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atmosphere of people really trying to understand one another. I felt hope for a stronger, more unified community.

Maintaining openness was a key to enhancing the wealth of collaborative effort and diversity displayed at the conference. Workshops included gay, lesbian and bisexual adolescents, parents, educators, families, disabled people and people of color and of age. Addressed were issues affecting all of us; relationships, legal issues, racism, incest, alcohol and substance abuse, anger, violence, health healing, and AIDS. Unfortunately, I could not be two places at the same time. There were several workshops held simultaneously and inevitably, I had to sacrifice and make a choice. The atmosphere at the conference was flexible enough, however, so that if my choice didn't suit me, I felt free to sit in on a different workshop. There were always conference planning members available to answer questions or give directions and the scheduling of workshops and presentations seemed to run smoothly and on time. My one big complaint concerns the scheduling of movies - they were all scheduled in conflict with workshops, an unfair choice to have to make.

After lunch on Saturday, there was a Diversity Panel Presentation; a discussion with speakers representing several different facets of our community. The presentation was opened with a song written by Charley King, a founding member of the musical group Bright Morning Star and sung by members of Face to Face. Appropriately enough, the song was about loving all kinds of people. Nelson Hernandez, a student at Amherst College talked about what it was like to be an Hispanic and "come out" as a homosexual at the college. I hadn't heard a sensitive male perspective on much of anything lately and was struck with this man's emotional clarity and way of expression. Next, Tim Blake, one of the steering committee members that helped plan the conference, shared his perspective as a black man, further enhancing my appreciation of male representation at the conference. Calling people without disabilities,

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## GET YOUR BRASS OUT OF THE CLOSET

And your drums, and your flutes, and your clarinets, and your saxophones! The Gay/Lesbian Freedom Trail Band needs you. Maybe you saw us at Pride, well, we are now in our concert season. Come and join us in making the community in Boston even more 'harmonious'. We will be doing many holiday concerts and plan on attending "The Gay Games" in San Fran next summer. Be a part of the national connection of gay, lesbian, and bisexual (semi-)musicians. You don't have to play well...most of us are relearning to play our instruments after having put them away since high school. Some of us are learning to play an instrument for the first time. You don't play an instrument and don't want to learn? That is OK too. We need twirlers, bell players, flag carriers - if you have the interest, we will find something for you to do! Call Betty at 497-9555 for info. The **Freedom Trail Band** is very non-biphobic. Straight men and women are also welcome to join.



"It's my parents. Quick, help me think up something heterosexual to say!"



"temporarily abled," Connie Panzarino, a high-spirited woman in a wheelchair told us about "coming out" and being disabled. "There's no privacy for the disabled person. You always have to have a nurse or attendant around." Her energy and sense of humor warmly communicated what she wanted: differently abled are people too, we have needs. Robyn Ochs, founder of BBWN, expressed the need for education to dispel the myths surrounding bisexuality and the need for recognizing our own oppressive assumptions about what bisexuality means. Lesbian mothering was highlighted by Mimi English who told stories about her kids. Her narratives portrayed the delights and difficulties of raising children in a lesbian household, balancing honesty and understanding with the realities of the innocence and cruelty of children. One chair remained empty. A person with AIDS was scheduled to appear but was too ill to attend, a statement in itself. Throughout the presentation, I felt led through other avenues of understanding and was brought closer to the experiences of others.

Several members of the community were honored Saturday evening at a Distinguished Service Awards Banquet, where members of the Valley Gay Alliance served Spanakopita and baked stuffed chicken to 150 conference participants. Nominations for the awards were made by mail and sent in with registration applications.

The first award for distinguished public service went to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance (GALA) — a local activist group that organizes the Annual Gay and Lesbian Pride March and is currently working on the foster care policy issue. Holly Parater and Marge Morgan were given an award for their work as therapists in establishing one of the first counseling groups available specifically for parents and friends of lesbians and gay men. In a moving presentation made by one of his friends and co-workers, Kevin McConnell, one of the founders of the Boston AIDS Action Committee, who died this year from the disease, was remembered with an award recognizing his contributions and personal service. Robyn Ochs, founder of BBWN, was presented an award for her work towards gaining visibility and recognition for the bisexual community. John Calvi, a massage therapist in the Springfield, MA area, was honored for his personal contribution and devotion of time to doing body work on AIDS patients. Gerry Studds was recognized as the only "out" congressman to have been re-elected after his admission of homosexuality. The Turkey of the Year Award went to Michael Dukakis for creating the Massachusetts Foster Care policy which discriminates against all non-traditional foster families, particularly gays and lesbians.

The evening ended with the Harvest Ball, a celebratory gathering open to the entire community. People danced and laughed until they couldn't any more. The next day was full of more workshops, movies and discussions. At three o'clock on Sunday, all the conference participants met in the main auditorium for an open forum and discussion about what the conference was like for them. People openly shared their thoughts, feelings and impressions surrounding the conference. I felt close to people I had only made eye contact with from across the room. We all held hands in solidarity. It was over. The Unity and Diversity Conference heightened my awareness of oppression as an active force working negatively within our own communities. Acceptance and understanding of the diversities that are inherent in all of us who choose alternative sexual lifestyles is the key to healthy and successful change within our movement.

— Susie Janicki



## Community Recognition ◆ROBYN OCHS◆

A few weekends ago, there was a wonderful 2 day conference held in Amherst, Ma. at Hampshire College. This conference was entitled "Celebrating the Unity and Diversity Within Our Community - Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual". When I saw that bisexuals were not only invited to attend, but were actually included in the title (which is unfortunately highly unusual), I had a feeling this conference was going to be a ground-breaking event for the community. I was right.

At this conference there were bisexuals abound. There always are at Lesbian/Gay conferences, but this time we didn't have to be in our closet within the closet. Lesbian women, gay men, bisexual women and bisexual men talked. We talked to each other. We talked about how hard being bisexual was (with lesbian women actively listening), bisexual women listened to lesbians talk about how hard it was for them to accept bisexuality, and we talked about the similarities and differences in our lifestyles. The weekend represented a gay/lesbian/bisexual utopian community for me. I loved it and drank it in eagerly.

There were many awards given at the Saturday evening Banquet and Ball, but two of these awards hold a special place within my heart. The first was an award given post-humously to Kevin McConville (sp?) who died from AIDS during the summer. Kevin had given himself unselfishly to AIDS education through inservices, TV interviews, a TV documentary, and personal work with other AIDS patients in the AIDS Action Committee. He, in fact, was one of the founders of the AAC prior to his own diagnosis. Laurel Brown accepted the award for Kevin. She had been a close personal friend of Kevin's and was with him in the last hours of his life. Her acceptance speech left the room silent with tears.

The second award also held special meaning for me. I had been contacted by one of the organizers of the conference and asked to present an award to a BBWN woman I have known for over 2 years. A woman who had personally helped me to become more comfortable with my sexuality. I felt honored. I felt honored for the bisexual community and full of bi-pride. At long last, the gay and lesbian community were not only acknowledging the existence of bisexuality, but were honoring someone for their bisexual energies in building a Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Community.

Wiping my own tears from my eyes, I was called up to the platform for her award presentation:

"A short three years ago, the word 'bisexuality' was virtually unspeakable. At that time, 8 women in a support group - calling themselves *The BiVocals* decided to hold a public meeting at the Cambridge Women's Center to see if there were more Bi women in Boston. An enthusiastic group of 30 women showed up, each talking about having finally found a home. From that meeting the Boston Bisexual Women's Network was formed. Eighty women showed up at the next meeting and the network grew...and grew. Today, it has continued to grow to a mailing list of more than 500 women from all over New England, all over the U.S., and in fact all over the world. Bi women's networks have now formed in other cities and states. The BBWN is just that - it is a network - with many women's energies making it happen. But

(Continued on page 8)



## The Club

"Uh, excuse me, please," I asked timidly, self-consciously.

Narrowed, suspicious eyes travelled up and down from my head to my toes, taking me in, sizing me up.

"Yeah, what?" a voice finally said, opening a little, just a little. Maybe it was my unshaven legs and armpits that won her over.

"Well, um," I continued, looking around nervously, not wanting anyone to hear me, in case I was outright rejected. "I would like to join the Club, whom do I speak to? Is there an admissions committee or something?"

She looked nonplussed, thrown off at the mention of an admissions committee. "You wanna join the Club?"

"Yes." My voice was stronger now, might as well go for it, I thought. "Who is in charge? I want to join the Club," I repeated.

"You a dyke?"

"So, are you in charge?" I avoided her question.

"Look, no one's IN CHARGE, and no admissions committee, either." She seemed irritated. "You think this is some kind of mainstream organization or something?"

"Well, no, but how do people get into the Club?" I persisted.

"O.K., you're right," she conceded. "Not just anyone gets into the Club. You a dyke?" she asked again.

"Well, not exactly..."

"Not exactly! What do you mean? You either are or you aren't. Like being pregnant."

"Well, it's not quite that easy for me," I explained nervously, having lost some of the strength that came to me before. I had to be honest, I knew, but I really wanted in to this Club.

"I really love women you see," I explained. "And I feel like a lesbian. I go to women's bars, I listen to women's music. I laugh at lesbian jokes. Some of my best friends are lesbians. My therapist is a lesbian."

She was finally looking interested. I laid down my last card.

"I was once involved with a woman."

Her interest definitely perked up. Maybe this was my ticket in.

"Oh yeah?"

"It was short," I explained quickly. "A romantic affair. I had my heart broken, but I got over it. And now I get crushes on women."

"Yeah," she nodded sympathetically, really looking at me, really listening to me.

"So, about the Club."

"Right, so you want to be in the Club. You involved with anyone now?"

"Well, yes, now I am involved with a man..."

"A man!" she interrupted me. "You can't be in the Club if you are involved with a man!"

I was crushed. "But I want to. They won't let me into the heterosexual club because I love women too much. Besides, I don't want to be in their club. I want to be in this Club."

"Look, I feel bad for you," she said. "I wouldn't want to be in their club either. But you know the rules. They aren't written down anywhere, but there have to be some rules, after all. And they are pretty clear. You can't join the Club if you are involved with a man. Why don't you join the bisexual club or something?"

"Shit. Damn. There isn't one."

— Eva C.

Y'all —

I want you to know how much BBWN has meant to me.

You wouldn't know it —

I went to one discussion and to the NE Regional Conference that' it.

Yet just the existence of this network and this newsletter has changed how I feel about myself, my bisexuality, and bisexuality as a political issue.

- I feel clear about my bisexual identity, despite being in a long-term partnership with a man. I no longer feel the two as incompatible.

- I tell people I'm bisexual, when given the opportunity. Before BBWN, I'd keep quiet. I've had discussions with both straight and lesbian friends about it.

- I was out as bisexual at social work school. I certainly wouldn't have done that pre-BBWN.

- I have encouraged bisexual friends to join BBWN.

- I talked with my mother about my bisexuality.

In short

I feel more centered and proud of who I am, more determined to work against sexism and homophobia, and more certain we can create a world of freedom to love without categories.

Thanks for all your work.

— Anne Slepian

an "inactive" member



## Reader's Forum

Dear BBWN,

As one of the organizers of the retreat this past summer, I received this letter from a man who attended the event. I was so touched by letter, I would like to share it with others who were also there (with his permission) and with those of you who were not:

"This past weekend I attended the 2nd Annual Bisexual Retreat

The ample land included two features that were of great importance to me - a gentle pine woods for camping and a meadow secluded enough to permit clothes optional activities.

I welcomed the invitation to set up a tent away from the house among the friendly trees because it is usually impossible for me to feel at home in a group. However, I did not anticipate the effect of taking off my clothes. Perhaps for you in California, that is not so much out of the ordinary as it is for me in N. Y.

It was a revelation for me that we could be our natural selves together with both sexes and to feel free to touch and hug. The four organizers of the retreat designated themselves as official huggers, setting the model for extroversion, expressive contact and kindly availability. I had never had the opportunity to feel so comfortably bisexual, to spontaneously admire various bodies and seek out conversations without the usual conflicts and inhibitions produced by cultural stereotypes. I was perceived as a bisexual and welcomed for that very reason. My sexuality was perfectly acceptable. To act completely without doubt about social acceptability is a tasty tonic. I don't know that I have ever felt such a lack of self-consciousness, such a stability of inner strength and such ease about my manliness.



Manliness has always been difficult for me to achieve because I never mastered those qualities which are designated by masculine attributes. My sense of manliness --

-- was subverted by my failure to be masculine. In a setting, however, where these gender assignments are discarded, and the sense of manliness comes not from performing masculine movements but from living out of your center with a firm belief in the rightness and suitability of your being, then it is possible to be open and loving and to enjoy creation. To become a rooted tree, a reservoir of water, a rock. Whether you know it or not, you are touching the eternal in yourself.

This made possible another blessing. The feeling of being an outsider has been a painful condition of life for me always. During this retreat, however, I felt that I belonged to the circle of people that had gathered together. I did not have to use my tent as an escape.

To be upheld by a sense of community and to be grounded in one's selfhood! To be an outcast no longer, having begun to heal the wound of not-belonging! I arrived at the retreat with a need - a familiar need of long standing that has carried me to many stopping places. My need was met here, and I return from the retreat with a vision -- a new vision of wholeness. Warmly, Bill

While planning the retreat, I was beginning to hear from some women that they would go if it was "women only". I, indeed, was feeling this myself--especially since there were no men involved in the planning. I went to the retreat thinking - "next year this is going to be women only". Bill's letter has helped me to see the importance of men finding a space among women where they don't have to act "macho". He has helped me to see that there are some men out there who also feel confined by socialized stereotypes. This has felt like an important lesson and I try to remember it when I go around generalizing about the males in this world. Betty

Dear BBWN,

I received your newsletter while attending UMass/Amherst and I loved it! I was really sorry to leave Massachusetts, but I'm checking out the bisexual community here in Baltimore now.

I really think your newsletter is put together well, and it has given me a tremendous amount of support. Now that I'm out of school, I hope to be able to contribute occasionally, with both writing and monetary support.

Thank you for all your efforts and good luck to everyone.

Sincerely, Julia Goodyear

Dear BBWN,

Enclosed is a money order for \$18 to pay for three low income memberships for three political artists in the South. We are all Scorpios and all very excited to see your newsletter and to know you exist. Your newsletter will be our birthday presents all year round. Thanks for your good work. Creating a bisexual community is the first step towards a future when I believe the majority of humans will be bisexual.

Love, Kathleen Hannan

Dear BBWN,

Your last newsletter was terrific, as always. Here in Seattle a bisexual network is in its formative stages, and we draw inspiration from you! There has been a support group for persons interested in exploring issues of sexuality of the bisexual through the Seattle Counseling service that has operated for a few years. Just recently one woman who found that her needs were not being met in that group, formed a group for women-only. Both groups meet bi-monthly, and this summer

## Bi Life in Progress...

from a Fourth of July picnic, 1985

Mark and Theresa both rallied (in the back yard, that is) against the action to try to place a foster child in the care of gays. Mark bringing up a case where a Big Brother figure had initiated a minor into homosexual practices, to back up his point.

I said, "I believe a child should be in a household where there is true love, be it in a gay or heterosexual family."

Theresa brought up how parents have children "ripped" from their homes to meet quota, before there is a thorough investigation. How children are taken from "stable" homes and placed in "unstable" homes. Mark asserted gay homes were unstable, that gays take to that lifestyle because it is "easier."

Almost laughing, I said, "Not quite!" I said there is good and bad on all fronts. That there are stable gay households, and that the bottom line, sexual preference notwithstanding, is that there must be love. We were agreeing on the pitfalls of bureaucracy, on the new "trend" toward sensationalizing child abuse, and quotas for violations. Agreeing that people are terribly hurt, that people have their children taken from them. Mark let into how welfare is no good and Theresa argued otherwise, pointing out all the mothers left with children and no money, who are penalized because of the people who take advantage of the system. I asserted that uncertainty surrounds each and every case and we agreed that foster parents as well as natural parents should be screened when it comes to child custody.

August 17

Theresa stopped by with tomatoes and green beans and told me she'd heard on the news that AIDS is now the largest killer of men in New York City. I find that hard to believe; I suspect she heard it on the 700 Club.

"They're saying that women can carry AIDS without knowing it," Theresa said, "and that they're getting it from bisexual men."

I said anyone could get it from any kind of contact -- straight or gay or bisexual.

"Oh I know," she said, and added, "People as straight as you have gotten it."

I wanted to check a mirror to see if I had turned beet red. I said how I knew lesbians, gay men and bisexuals who were good, decent people -- and there I drew a personal line for myself.

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marched in the Gay Pride parade and held several parties. Plans are being made for expanded functions. Keep up the good work!

I imagine you know about the Bisexual Center in San Francisco. Their address is: P.O. Box 421924, SF, CA 94124-1924. They have an archives and assist people writing dissertations and books on bisexuality. They also have a speaker's bureau, have appeared on numerous radio and TV shows, and provide counseling and social events, support groups and topic evenings.

I am very excited about the potential here for this group to flourish. In general I have found the Lesbians here to be very supportive of bisexuality -- or at least tolerant.

I want to thank Robyn for her wonderful article about Alix Dobkin (who was my favorite while I was lesbian-identified, and now I know I don't have to give her up!) and to wish her a happy birthday. You are fabulous -- as a writer, organizer and all around committed leader for bisexuals. Thank-you!!!!

--



## Bisexuality & Discrimination

BY LANI KAAHUMANU

One of the biggest "jokes" of the Lesbian/Gay parade every year was observing the bisexual contingent. As far as I was concerned they were a bunch of closet cases, not deserving of serious consideration. As a lesbian, I felt superior in some ways and was embarrassed for them. How naive to take the bisexual "stage" seriously. I was sure their confusion would clear up and they would "come out" when they let go of the very real heterosexual privilege they were obviously clinging to. Why else would anyone say they were bisexual?

This deep rooted contempt and ignorance of bisexuality is common in the Lesbian/Gay community. It is these attitudes that kept me closeted. The few times I was sexual with a man, it was understood that I was a Lesbian who still had some issues to "work out" with men. I didn't even consider bisexuality; it wasn't a legitimate possibility. Furthermore, I would be ostracized from the supportive women's community and run the risk of losing all my friends.

When I first claimed my bisexuality the panic and feelings of isolation were overwhelming, but I knew that trusting myself was the only way to live life no matter what the outside circumstances. I realized that my biphobic attitudes were in direct proportion to my own suppressed bisexual feelings. My new found awareness had nothing to do with privilege, or an inability on my part to make a choice. These feelings had everything to do with being a bisexual in a world that denies our existence.

Since enforced heterosexuality affects us in ways we are still discovering/recovering from, I want to discuss the validity of the idea of stages, and the fact that for my sexuality, Lesbianism was a stage. Now this could be taken as a rather shocking, politically incorrect and unsisterly statement. It is not meant as such. I am not denying Lesbian existence by expressing my sexual attraction for certain women and men. It doesn't make me wishy-washy, confused, untrustworthy, or more sexually liberated. It makes me a bisexual.

The polarized heterosexist "norm" and, to a lesser degree, the homosexist "norm" sees bisexuality exclusively as a "phase" from one to the other and perhaps back again, invalidating it as a way to be, a chosen sexuality per se. However, if we take a closer look, we see that in our lives we have exploratory periods. Many Lesbians and Gay men had heterosexual and/or bisexual stages before they clarified their homosexual feelings. It is in this way that exclusive heterosexuality and homosexuality are often transitional for bisexuals. So what is important here, is that no matter where your sexual preference ends up, it is the use of the word "stage" or "phase" as a one-up attitude that hurts every one of us.

*Lani Kaahumanu is a feminist writer, actor, political activist and mother of 2 living in San Francisco. She has B.A.'s in Women Studies and Psychology from San Francisco State University, and is currently working on a book on bisexuality and the feminist movement. She co-coordinated the BI-POL contingent in the 1984 Lesbian Gay Freedom Day Parade which won the Cable Car Award for The Most Outrageous Contingent.*



Bisexuals have been part of the heterosexual communities since the beginning of time. We are an "invisible" minority within both categories. No matter which community a bisexual "belongs to," hiding feels the same, in that it perpetuates the experience of isolation, fear of discovery/loss, alienation, self doubt—the list goes on and is all too familiar to those closeted. But because AIDS is a menacing presence, there is a false sense of "security" one gets from staying in, or returning to the closet. It is important for me as a lesbian identified bisexual woman, who is politically dedicated to and active in the feminist movement, to discuss bisexuality as a valid lifestyle, to challenge the prejudices and encourage people to come out.

Regardless of how I want to label or not label my behavior, it must be discussed when I am getting to know someone. I feel a sense of responsibility about being honest with who I am and what my sexual behavior is—whether or not I call myself a bisexual, a lesbian, a lesbian identified bisexual, or even a lesbian who sleeps with men on occasion. It is the behavior that is important. Whatever same/cross sexuality combination there might be, labels and behavior are not mutually exclusive. When some people are made invisible, and others more politically/socially correct it forms new or maintains the old hierarchies. There is no politically/socially correct sexual preference. There is sexual behavior that is on a spectrum of many possibilities.

Since we live in a society that is based and thrives on dichotomous, either/or assumptions, the decision to come out as a bisexual makes the issues surrounding personal behavior and labels confusing, to say the least. When I was coming out I understood that I would be seen as a traitor, weakening lesbian pride and unity. The self doubt and isolation I felt were very real. There is a grain of truth that coming out undermines the lesbian gay movement because bisexuality gives credence to the homophobic/heterosexist belief that there is no such thing as a homosexual. But it is also true that in the long run not coming out as a bisexual undercuts not only the personal liberation of bisexual people, but it perpetuates the equally dangerous belief that there is no such thing as a bisexual.

I recognize that homophobia is at the root of biphobia. I came to lesbianism long before my sexuality was clear to me. I lived an open lesbian lifestyle for four years. I cannot deny the importance of this experience, nor do I want to. For me lesbian identity is more than, and/or in addition to sexuality; it is a political awareness which bisexuality doesn't altar or detract from. 10 years ago when I left my husband and full-time role of motherhood, it didn't make me less conscious of what being a mother means. In fact, it gave me a deeper understanding. I am still a mother. That experience cannot be taken away from me. In much the same way, my lesbian awareness isn't lost now that I claim my bisexuality. When I realized my woman-loving-woman feelings, and came out as a lesbian, I had no heterosexual privilege; yet there were important males in my life, including a son. I am a bisexual because it's real for me, not in order to acquire or flaunt the privilege that is inherent in being with men. My political consciousness is lesbian but my lifestyle is bisexual. If I keep myself quiet for another's sense of pride and liberation, it is at the cost of my own which isn't healthy—emotionally, politically or medically. Not only is it unhealthy, it's ineffective.

Since I have come out I have triggered many lesbians to blurt in whispered confidence—"I have a man in the closet. You're brave to be so open. What am I going to do?" These are not easy times. AIDS has given biphobia free reign in the lesbian community (and admittedly with much less destructive effect than how AIDS is fueling homophobia in society at large). It is all right to trash bisexuals, not to trust us for fear of AIDS. Bisexuals are untouchables to some lesbians.

We have to deal with oppression in a constructive way or we will be factionalized forever. Time is running out. We have to see the whole and the part we play in it. Forming family communities with people who share your sexual identity is important, but trashing is nonproductive. The sexual choices we make are equally valid for our individual experiences. AIDS is not a gay disease; it is a human tragedy, a plague that doesn't recognize boundaries. I urge bisexuals to take a political stand, and to become a visible, viable energy force. It is important and timely to open this dialogue in each of our communities. Nobody belongs in the closet. The only way to get a sense of "our" community is for us to begin to speak out and identify ourselves. When we verify the connections and the networks of our oppression, we build a unity that avoids the, "I'm more oppressed than you" syndrome.

Reprinted from the 1985 Gay Pride March magazine, San Francisco.



# Lifestyle Poll

Hi! The results are finally in!

This poll was distributed to women on the BBWN mailing list from the winter of 1984 through the spring of 1985.

A rough profile is emerging which seems to indicate a membership that's growing and searching, and finding BBWN a safe place to do this.

The total number of responses varied on each question, but a total of 183 forms were turned in. That's out of a membership of 500. 40% is a great response rate!

## General Trends:

Fairly young. Majority of responses from 24-29 age group

Overwhelmingly childless - 90%

72% Mostly hetero or "No preference" sexuality

64% Hetero or "No preference" lifestyle

71% Usually or strongly monogamous

29% Not in ongoing sexual relationship, but want to be

24% In a support group

53% Attended at least one BBWN meeting

18% Have done volunteer work for BBWN

70% Paid dues

Some respondents to the poll found the questions too limiting or not applicable to their situation. Some of their comments are included here.

- "I wish my feelings were as clear cut as these questions!"
- "My innate, free sexuality is bisexuality, while my chosen sexuality at this point in history is Lesbianism."
- "I don't experience my sexuality as a single quantity that can be divided equally or unequally between men and women."
- "Is 'sexuality' who you sleep with or who you want to sleep with or just how you identify with politically? If 'sexuality' is who you want to sleep with, is 'lifestyle' who you end up sleeping with, despite your best efforts?"

So many questions — some with answers, some without — BBWNers, as a whole, seem to be moving, as a result of their constant questioning: of themselves, their assumptions, and of each other, towards a fuller understanding of themselves. What a terrific destination!

-- Mary S

1. Age  
Ranged from 17-43. Most responses in 24-29 age group. Average age: 27
2. Children  
90% Don't have children  
8% Do  
2% No response
3. What is your sexuality?  
1.7% Exclusively homosexual  
25 % Mostly homosexual  
38 % No Preference  
34 % Mostly heterosexual  
1.7% Exclusively heterosexual
4. What is your lifestyle?  
6.4% Exclusively homosexual  
27 % Mostly homosexual  
23 % No Preference  
41 % Mostly heterosexual  
1.7% Exclusively heterosexual
5. On Monogamy  
17 % Strongly monogamous  
54 % Usually monogamous  
15 % Usually non-monogamous  
3.4% Strongly non-monogamous  
10 % Not sure



# Classified

## WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Time limited women's support group starting soon - Wednesday or Friday afternoons - 3 to 5 PM. Informal discussion group for women to share past and present experiences with the thirties transition. Encourages women to help each other find new meanings in old patterns and to support positive changes. A chance to meet other women and form an on-going support network. \$15/session. Facilitator - Peggy Fox, Feminist Therapist. Call 498-9923 for more info.

Bisexual trauma got you down?

Diminutive support group looking to expand. Meets regularly - Sun., Mon., or Fri. Topics include careerism, enticing, non-feminist men, attractive unattainable women, perfect contraception in an imperfect world, bi-sci-fi and whatever ideas you may bring. For details contact Nancy I. 623-2581 or Lucy F. 739-6566

My schedule is way overbooked. I have been doing the BBWN ads for over a year now and find that I need to pass on the responsibility. It does not take very much time, but is crucial to the running of the newsletter. An easy way to get involved with the network. **PLEASE CALL BETTY AT 497-9555**

Women interested in networking to share skills and resources — info on women's spirituality ... esp. interested in healing through crystals. Also thru grounding (ah! mother earth!), rituals, witchcraft, circling, gathering around the full moon. Please call Roberta: 787-4764. Am already connected with women, so if you can't reply, that's ok — please take care of yourselves and the earth and the magic.

6. Are you currently involved in an ongoing sexual relationship?  
21% Yes, Monogamous w/a man  
8% Yes, Monogamous w/a woman  
6% Yes, w/a man and woman  
3% No, don't want to be  
18% Yes, non-monogamous w/a man  
3% Yes, non-monogamous w/a woman  
29% No, but want to be  
11% No, not sure if I want to be
7. Are you in a support group?  
24% Yes  
76% No
8. Have you attended at least 1 BBWN meeting?  
53% Yes  
44% No  
3% No Response
9. Have you attended 3 or more meetings?  
20% Yes  
35% No  
44% No Response
10. Have you attended any BBWN social events?  
30% Yes  
67% No  
3% No Response
11. Have you done any volunteer work for BBWN?  
18% Yes  
78% No  
4% No Response  
Stats compiled by Maya, Sharon G, Suzie F, and Mary S.



No CC meeting or volunteer night in December.  
Have a Happy Holiday!!!!

December 7 (Saturday) Songs for Cambridge by Marcia Deihl; Modern Times Cafe, 184 Hampshire, Cambridge; 9 p.m.; \$3; Join Marcia for songs of reds, beats, punks, hippies, early feminists (Rated XX), and wise fools-- Tom Lehrer, Kurt Weill, Bev Grant, Procul Harem, and Marcia. Also, the world premier of Bizarre Song Contest winners! 277-4618 for info.

December 2 (Monday) BBWN Introductory Meeting at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, 7:30 p.m. Call Robyn for info, 491-8334

December 13 (Friday) BBWN Holiday Party!! Laura's house, 78 LaGrange, Brookline (near Chestnut Hill green line T stop). See announcement elsewhere in newsletter for details. And come!!

January 10 (Friday) BBWN newsletter deadline for Feb-March edition. Submit original material, classifieds, & calendar announcements to P.O. Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

January 22 (Wednesday) BBWN General Meeting at Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin Street, Boston; 7:30 p.m.

January 26 (Sunday) BBWN Coordinating Committee Meeting; 6 p.m.; call 491-8334 for details.

January 27 (Monday) Volunteer Night; 7:30 p.m. "Hands-on" participation in the network. Come help us stuff the newsletter, gossip, and have a good time. 491-8334 for details.

February 10 (Monday) BBWN Introductory Meeting at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge; 7:30 p.m.

February 23 (Sunday) BBWN Coordinating Committee Meeting; 6 p.m. All welcome!

February 24 (Monday) Volunteer Night; all really welcomed!! 491-8334.

March 8,9 (Saturday, Sunday) Regional Conference on Bisexuality; Augusta, ME. More details soon but plan ahead!

(Continued from page 3)

especially the energy of one woman. This woman is one of the few from the original founding group that is still actively involved; active meaning that she invests about 20 hrs/wk so that more and more bi women can have a safe, non bi-phobic space in which to explore their identities - as women and as bisexuals. This conference today is a perfect example of some of the "coming out" she and BBWN have helped people to do. To be Bisexual and Proud and to find and take our rightful home in the gay and lesbian community. Tonight, I take delight for myself and all the women of BBWN, the men of BBMN, and all the women and men in the community touched by her unceasing enthusiasm and energy in presenting this "Distinguished Service Award for Personal Contribution" to Robyn Ochs as a token of our appreciation.

To those of you who know Robyn, I'm sure you will as surprised as I was to find her speechless. Robyn did not know that she was to receive an award that evening (many of us at the table did!), and after a quick "Thank You", she scurried back to her seat. You will all be happy to know that she has regained her speaking abilities and is once again verbalizing "FIGHT BI-PHOBIA".

To those of you who do not know her, please come to our Christmas party to meet (and congratulate) her.

To Robyn, thank you again from us all. Thanks for your energy, your encouragement, your friendship, and your hugs. Betty Aubut

(Continued from page 5)

Between people, straight or gay or bisexual, who are "looking for love in all the wrong places" -- looking for sex -- and those who simply love.

Theresa agreed with me that there are "decent" people -- of any persuasion. "They do not have to worry, then," she said.

I am a mostly celibate person. All my love affairs have been monogamous, and all means four. And it is an androgynous outlook -- a love of men and women and a potential to take either as a lover sexually, that makes me bisexual. I am a sensuous creature, celibacy aside. I abide by certain personal morals.

Almost -- almost -- I came out. But the context was not quite what I wanted it to be, and when it is, is for me to decide. The context surrounding AIDS was a "scare talk" Mark gave to a fourteen year old boy who was mailing pornography

to a girl whom Mark and Theresa's daughter is working with as a candy stripper. [Mark and Theresa have four children.] The girl calls the boy at all hours of the night and talks only to him -- hangs up when a parent gets on the line. Adolescent experimentation. At the same time one of the kids' relatives (I don't know if it was the boy's or the girl's) has been imprisoned for sexually abusing his three teenage children.

So I did not come out to Theresa. Not yet.

A few days ago she had stopped by with ingeniously made, "homemade" barbells. Gallon plastic jugs filled with sand and slipped onto either end of a broom handle. Duct tape rolled around the handle to either side.

"They're good for toning the muscles," she said. "About ten pounds; five on each side. Not too heavy, like 20 pounds; not enough to build muscles. I think those women body builders look freaky."

I hefted the barbells. "This is heavier than ten pounds, I think."

"Get on the scale with it." She added, "I've been wanting to do that; I haven't had the guts to, yet."

I got on the scale and laughed. "Well, this weighs 20 pounds!"

"Really! Wow!" Theresa shook her head. Her grin was infectious.

Now, Theresa was telling me how she would teach children discipline and "natural" responsibilities: "The girls to clean house, wash, cook and sew; the boys to take out the garbage, fix things, shovel snow..." She added, "The way my grandmother did it."

I laughed and said I believed in things the way my grandmother did them, added my grandma had been the breadwinner in her family and my mother in hers.

"I love to shovel snow," I said, "and work with my hands. I hate to wash floors, but I have no problem doing dishes, and I love to cook. Can't sew too well but I'm good at weeding."

"Oh, if I had a boy who wanted to do the dishes I'd let him -- or a girl who wanted to shovel snow," Theresa said. "But I wouldn't tell them to do that. I'd let them do it if they asked."

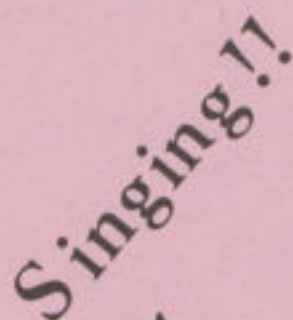
We both agreed that children should be taught household responsibilities. Theresa was surprised that I didn't argue that point (we tend to surprise each other!), and she laughed, wide eyed, when I told her I'd had no desire to play with dolls as a child but absolutely adored my collection of Matchbox cars!

(To be continued ... as life goes on.)

—Elissa Malcohn







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**DEC. 13**  
**8-12**

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78 LaGrange  
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Join us for Fun

☆  
Dancing!!

!!!!\$\$\$\$\$!!!!!\$\$\$\$\$!!!!!\$\$\$\$\$!!!!!\$\$\$\$\$!!!!!\$\$\$\$\$!!!!!\$\$\$\$\$!!!!!

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- ☐ \$6 LOW INCOME                      ☐ \$25 SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP  
☐ \$12 REGULAR MEMBERSHIP           ☐ \$50 NEAR GODDESS

- ☐ I have paid BBWN dues since 5/85 and am therefore a current member.
- ☐ I am not interested in being a member at this time, but have enclosed a gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support your work.
- ☐ I am unable to send any money at this time but please keep me on your mailing list.
- ☐ Please delete my name from your mailing list

THANKS!!!!!!THANKS!!!!!!THANKS!!!!!!THANKS!!!!!!THANKS!!!!!!THANKS!!!!!!

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Women interested in working on our annual Regional Conference on Bisexuality, which will take place March 8-9 in Portland, ME, contact Beth at 643-3726. It may seem early but there's a lot to be done!